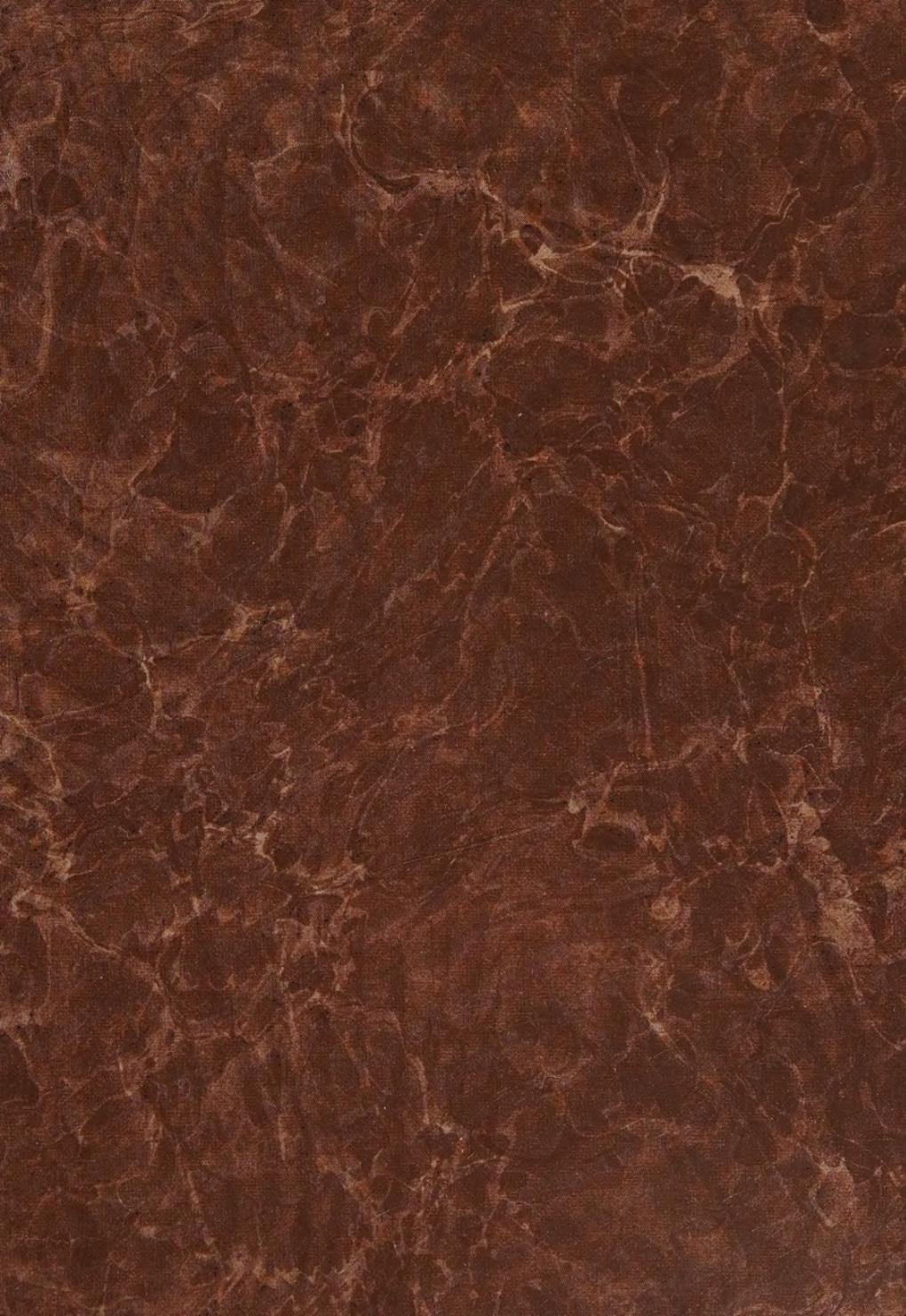


SCOTTISH HISTORY

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"TOLD
THROUGH
THE
AGES"

STORIES FROM SCOTTISH HISTORY



Catherine Bar-the-Door

STORIES FROM SCOTTISH HISTORY

SELECTED FROM
SCOTT'S "TALES OF A GRANDFATHER"
BY
MADALEN EDGAR M.A.

*"Old unhappy far-off things,
And battles long ago."*

WORDSWORTH

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PREFACE

TO present a selection from Sir Walter Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather" appears at first sight to be taking an unpardonable liberty with such an established favourite.

The size of the storehouse, however, is apt to discourage search for the treasures within, and it is possible that many of the "Tales" may be enjoyed by children who yet could not make their way through the whole book.

In the present volume the stories are taken from the *First Series*, and, since space forbids a wider range, all lie between the rise of William Wallace and the Union of the Crowns. This limit, unfortunately, excludes the Tale of Macbeth, which, largely perhaps from the simplicity of its language, is one of Sir Walter's best-told "Tales"; but the story is beyond the region of authentic history, and is, besides, well known to most children from Shakespeare's play. It was also with much regret that the account of Malcolm Canmore and his Saxon Queen was omitted, as well as the vivid description of the Battle of the Standard.

The selections do not represent every phase in the history of the three centuries embraced, nor are they claimed to be in strict quantitative proportion to their

historical importance. Occasionally an incident is omitted for the sole reason that Scott's treatment of it is too weighty to admit of its inclusion in a simple book of stories. For instance, it may seem strange that an event of such moment as the Reformation should, with its dauntless hero Knox, have been passed over in silence, but it was felt that there was too little incident in the chapters dealing with the subject to render them sufficiently interesting for the present purpose.

Consecutive narration has been aimed at, and where the connection between the chapters is interrupted, the chronological table on the last pages of the book may be of use in bridging the interval.

At certain points, principally at the commencement of chapters, some small rearrangement of the text has been necessary, but with these unimportant exceptions the original has been faithfully followed.

The above explanations indicate the scope of this little book. It is hoped that Sir Walter Scott's lively sketches may interest his young readers in the history of that country which he loved so dearly and depicted so well.

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Introduction

IT was in the summer of 1827 that Sir Walter Scott told his six-year-old grandson many stories of Scottish kings and warriors as, mounted on "Douce Davie" and the Shetland pony "Marion," they rode together through the woods round Abbotsford.

While autumn was passing into winter, and there were rainy days to spend in his library, Sir Walter wrote out the stories which had delighted his small audience under the trees, and dedicated these "Tales of a Grandfather" to Hugh Littlejohn, Esq. (properly John Hugh Lockhart), in words which are still read by hundreds of people, though the child to whom they were addressed died more than seventy years ago.

In the "Tales of a Grandfather" we have a complete history of Scotland down to the end of the Rebellion of '45, when Charles Edward Stuart, the Bonnie Prince Charlie of Jacobite song, made his unsuccessful attempt to win the Scottish throne from George II. Besides telling us of events in Scottish history, Sir Walter describes the laws and customs of the country in different times—matters which are as important, and often quite as interesting, as any account of battles and heroic deeds. With so much to write about, it is no wonder Scott has given us a large book. Its size is almost eight times that of the present selections, which are taken from the earlier part of "Tales of a Grandfather."

We generally find that the best stories are those told by people who have themselves seen what they describe, or by those who can most fully imagine how things appeared at the time and place they speak of. Sir Walter Scott's lively pictures are due to two facts: first, that he had himself visited the places mentioned in his History, many of them being favourite haunts of his, while his antiquarian tastes made him familiar with the armour, dress, and implements of olden times; and secondly, that he had the gift of peopling historic sites with the appropriate figures of those who had once moved in them. To conjure up the past was a favourite amusement with Sir Walter, and wherever a place recalled to his mind some famous deed, the actors, in his imagination, moved once more on the scenes, and history lived again.

Of course, imagination alone could not have performed such feats. Scott had (to use his own phrase) "fastened like a tiger" upon every collection of old songs or romances which chance threw in his way, and from these, and from books of Scottish history and tradition, he gained so accurate a knowledge of distant times that he could indulge his fancy without letting it lead him astray. To wander through the country was another of his pleasures. Sometimes his excursions were on horseback, more often on foot. In his early days, in spite of his lameness, he would walk long distances, going on in a dreamy fashion much farther than he intended. At that time twenty to thirty miles a day did not seem to him an unreasonable amount of walking. Indeed, his father, who was sometimes annoyed by the fits of wandering which led the lad so far from home, would say that in his belief Walter was born to be a strolling pedlar!

When he had a week or so at his disposal, in the summers which followed his being called to the Bar, he explored Liddesdale, a lonely district where many a dismantled Border tower reminded him that—

“ A time there was
When this hill-pass
With castle, keep, and peel,
Stood iron-teethed,
Like warrior sheathed
In mail from head to heel.”

These “raids” into Liddesdale are a good example of the way in which Scott picked up much of his curious lore. Making his way through a part of the country where there were no inns at which to spend the night, he would find shelter each evening in some lonely farmhouse or shepherd’s cottage, and from his hosts would learn the traditions of the place, often in the words of a Border ballad which had never found its way into print. These old-world verses delighted him at the time he heard them from the lips of country-folk, and, sinking into his memory, they were a treasure to the end of his life. Without effort he could recall any number of rhymes. He was known to repeat a ballad of eighty-eight stanzas which he had heard only once—and this after a considerable time had elapsed.

So, while some historians are content to range libraries in search of material for their writings, Scott, though making full use of books, went literally farther afield. But it must not be supposed that his early wanderings, such as the “Liddesdale raids,” were undertaken with a view to writing at a future date. It was without a thought of the use he might afterwards make of such lore

Peel: a square tower.

that he first entered on the quest of collecting local stories and verses. As an old Scottish friend of his remarked long after : “ He was makin’ himsel’ a’ the time, but he didna ken maybe what he was about till years had passed. At first he thought o’ little, I daresay, but the queerness and the fun.”

Sir Walter Scott’s knowledge of the history of his country is quite as remarkable for the uncommon nature of the facts he gathered, as for their enormous quantity. This is just what we should expect, knowing of his delight in escaping from beaten tracks. Any little anecdote concerning characters in Scottish history, any song which breathed the feeling of another age, any tradition or superstition still lingering in the minds of country people, —one and all, these remnants of earlier life in Scotland were added to the solid basis of history on which his books are built.

Lord Macaulay illustrates the value of these scraps which Sir Walter collected. In Lincoln Cathedral, he says, there is a beautiful painted window which, strangely enough, was made by an apprentice out of pieces of glass thrown aside by his master. In like fashion Scott has picked up many fragments of ballads and local history which some writers would not deign to use, looking on them as too insignificant, but which in his hands go to form books of romance and history surpassing others of more elaborate workmanship.

It is told of Sir Walter Raleigh that one day he watched from his prison window a brawl in the street, which he afterwards described, along with three other eye-witnesses, and no two out of the four reports were alike. And if it is difficult to get an undisputed description of recent events, it is much more so in the case of what has happened

several hundred years ago—our historians having often to choose between different accounts of the same incident.

Sir Walter Scott is not a *critical* historian. His “Tales of a Grandfather” were written for a child, and he does not in them argue about disputed facts, or attempt to find a solution for mysteries which have baffled the most ingenious investigators—such as the Gowrie plot, or Queen Mary’s share in the murder of Darnley. He prefers, in such cases, to tell the facts as they are acknowledged by everyone, and not to bias his readers in their view, though in the case of Queen Mary he does not conceal his own disapproval of Elizabeth’s conduct towards her cousin.

He is, on the whole, lenient and kindly in his judgments, and when he has to decide between conflicting opinions he is glad to accept, or at least consider, the better view of an action. His admiration for King Robert the Bruce has been challenged by critical historians, who point out that Bruce in his earlier days fought for his own gain, and they call him, in consequence, an adventurer. But Scott does not excuse his earlier conduct. He speaks of him as being guilty of a base crime when he fought with the English against Scotland, and all his praise is justly given to the Bruce who, throwing aside selfish motives, became the hero and liberator of his country.

Sir Walter was a staunch Tory. His love for the “old order” of things, however, is not due to his Conservatism alone: it springs from his interest as a lawyer in records of earlier generations, from his passion as an antiquarian for relics of the past, but most of all from his devotion as a Scotsman to the country which cradled his race.

And, indeed, the history of Scotland might well fascinate a man of Sir Walter's romance-loving nature. Its long story of strife and bloodshed is relieved by wonderful instances of love and loyalty and gallantry carried to the verge of foolhardiness ; on every page we are in the midst of stir and warfare—

“ The air is full of battle,
It is full of the trumpets' sound,
Of the tramp of dashing horses
And the cries of the crowd around.”

The repeated claims of England to the overlordship of Scotland, and the fierce love of liberty which has always characterised the peoples of the northern kingdom, involved the two countries from earliest times in an almost continuous state of warfare ; when this was in abeyance the spirit of enmity still lurked on the Borders, and Scots and English alike made deadly raids for the pleasure of plundering their hostile neighbours. Besides constant quarrels with the English, Scotland suffered from disturbances at home. The early Jameses had, time after time, to combat the ambitious Douglases—“ stalwart earls, broad-browed, black-bearded, pinnacled on power o'ergrown,” who threatened to wrest the crown from the Stewart family. And if quiet prevailed around the King's person, there were still endless broils among the unruly Borderers or wild Highland clans in the north. Boldness and ferocity were conspicuous in the men who battled for their very existence in those days ; but loyalty, courage, and endurance came too from their harsh training, and true knights there were on both sides of the Border, who acted up to the maxim—

“ Thy sword is to keep thine honour white,
And thine honour must keep thy good sword bright,
And both must be free from stain.”

In their descendants we can trace the same sterling qualities which marked the noblest of the earlier Scots. Perhaps in none are the characteristics of courage and endurance, loyalty and patriotism, more clearly seen than in him who gave us these tales “far brought from out the storied past.”

M. G. E.

Stories from Scottish History

CHAPTER I

FOR HOME AND COUNTRY

Thou takest a pledge upon thee now
To be loyal and true and brave,
Ever to succour the weak and low,
And to make the fierce oppressor bow,
And the helpless to aid and save.

M. B. SMEDLEY.

EDWARD I. of England reduced Scotland almost entirely to the condition of a conquered country, although he had obtained possession of the kingdom, less by his bravery, than by cunningly taking advantage of the disputes and divisions that followed amongst the Scots themselves after the death of Alexander III.

The English soldiers, who had been placed in garrison in the different castles of Scotland, thought themselves masters of the country, treated the Scots with great contempt, took from them by main force whatever they had a fancy to, and if the owners offered to resist, abused them, beat and wounded, and sometimes killed them ; for which acts of violence the English officers did not check or punish their soldiers. Scotland was, therefore, in great distress, and the inhabitants, exceedingly enraged, only wanted some leader to command them, to rise up in a body against the English or *Southern* men, as they

called them, and recover the liberty and independence of their country, which had been destroyed by Edward the First.

Such a leader arose in the person of William Wallace, whose name is still so often mentioned in Scotland. It is a great pity we do not know exactly the history of this brave man ; for at the time when he lived, every one was so busy fighting, that there was no person to write down the history of what took place ; and afterwards, when there was more leisure for composition, the truths that were collected were greatly mingled with falsehood. What I shall tell you of him, is generally believed to be true.

William Wallace was the son of a private gentleman, called Wallace of Ellerslie, in Renfrewshire, near Paisley. He was very tall and handsome, and one of the strongest and bravest men that ever lived. He had a very fine countenance, with a quantity of fair hair, and was particularly dexterous in the use of all weapons which were then employed in battle. Wallace, like all Scotsmen of high spirit, had looked with great indignation upon the usurpation of the crown by Edward, and upon the insolences which the English soldiers committed on his countrymen. It is said, that when he was very young, he went a-fishing for sport in the river of Irvine, near Ayr. He had caught a good many trout, which were carried by a boy, who attended him with a fishing-basket, as is usual with anglers. Two or three English soldiers, who belonged to the garrison of Ayr, came up to Wallace, and insisted, with their usual insolence, on taking the fish from the boy. Wallace was contented to allow them a part of the trout, but he refused to part with the whole basketful. The soldiers insisted, and from words



“Wallace put the Englishmen to Flight”

came to blows. Wallace had no better weapon than the butt-end of his fishing-rod ; but he struck the foremost of the Englishmen so hard under the ear with it, that he killed him on the spot ; and getting possession of the slain man's sword, he fought with so much fury that he put the others to flight, and brought home his fish safe and sound. The English governor of Ayr sought for him, to punish him with death for this action ; but Wallace lay concealed among the hills and great woods till the matter was forgotten, and then appeared in another part of the country. He is said to have had other adventures of the same kind, in which he gallantly defended himself, sometimes when alone, sometimes with very few companions, against superior numbers of the English, until at last his name became generally known as a terror to them.

But the action which occasioned his finally rising in arms, is believed to have happened in the town of Lanark. Wallace was at this time married to a lady of that place, and residing there with his wife. It chanced, as he walked in the market-place, dressed in a green garment, with a rich dagger by his side, that an Englishman came up and insulted him on account of his finery, saying, a Scotsman had no business to wear so gay a dress, or carry so handsome a weapon. It soon came to a quarrel, as on many former occasions ; and Wallace, having killed the Englishman, fled to his own house, which was speedily assaulted by all the English soldiers. While they were endeavouring to force their way in at the front of the house, Wallace escaped by a back-door, and got in safety to a rugged and rocky glen, near Lanark, called the Cartland crags, all covered with bushes and trees, and full of high precipices, where he knew he should be safe from the pursuit of the English soldiers. In the meantime,

the governor of Lanark, whose name was Hazelrigg, burned Wallace's house, and put his wife and servants to death ; and by committing this cruelty increased to the highest pitch, as you may well believe, the hatred which the champion had always borne against the English usurper. Hazelrigg also proclaimed Wallace an outlaw, and offered a reward to any one who should bring him to an English garrison, alive or dead.

On the other hand, Wallace soon collected a body of men, outlawed like himself, or willing to become so, rather than any longer endure the oppression of the English. One of his earliest expeditions was directed against Hazelrigg, whom he killed, and thus avenged the death of his wife. He fought skirmishes with the soldiers who were sent against him, and often defeated them ; and in time became so well known and so formidable, that multitudes began to resort to his standard, until at length he was at the head of a considerable army, with which he proposed to restore his country to independence.

CHAPTER II

A PATRIOT IN ARMS

Not few nor slight his burdens are
Who gives himself to stand,
Steadfast and sleepless as a star
Watching his fatherland.

M. B. SMEDLEY.

ABOUT this time is said to have taken place a memorable event, which the Scottish people called the Barns of Ayr. It is alleged that the English governor of Ayr had invited the greater part of the Scottish nobility and gentry in the western parts, to meet him at some large buildings called the barns of Ayr, for the purpose of friendly conference upon the affairs of the nation. But the English earl entertained the treacherous purpose of putting the Scottish gentlemen to death. The English soldiers had halters with running nooses ready prepared, and hung upon the beams which supported the roof ; and as the Scottish gentlemen were admitted by two and two at a time, the nooses were thrown over their heads, and they were pulled up by the neck, and thus hanged or strangled to death. Among those who were slain in this base and treacherous manner, was, it is said, Sir Reginald Crawford, Sheriff of the county of Ayr, and uncle to William Wallace.

When Wallace heard of what had befallen, he was

dreadfully enraged, and collecting his men in a wood near the town of Ayr, he resolved to be revenged on the authors of this great crime. The English in the meanwhile made much feasting, and when they had eaten and drunk plentifully, they lay down to sleep in the same large barns in which they had murdered the Scottish gentlemen. But Wallace, learning that they kept no guard or watch, not suspecting there were any enemies so near them, directed a woman who knew the place, to mark with chalk the doors of the lodgings where the Englishmen lay. Then he sent a party of men, who, with strong ropes, made all the doors so fast on the outside, that those within could not open them. On the outside the Scots had prepared heaps of straw, to which they set fire, and the barns of Ayr, being themselves made of wood, were soon burning in a bright flame. Then the English were awakened, and endeavoured to get out to save their lives. But the doors, as I told you, were secured on the outside, and bound fast with ropes ; and, besides, the blazing houses were surrounded by the Scots, who forced those who got out to run back into the fire, or else put them to death on the spot ; and thus great numbers perished miserably. Many of the English were lodged in a convent, but they had no better fortune than the others ; for the prior of the convent caused all the friars to arm themselves, and, attacking the English guests, they put most of them to the sword. This was called the “ Friar of Ayr’s blessing.” We cannot tell if this story of the *Barns of Ayr* be exactly true ; but it is probable there is some foundation for it, as it is universally believed in that country.

Thus Wallace’s party grew daily stronger and stronger, and many of the Scottish nobles joined with him. Among these were Sir William Douglas, the Lord of Douglas-dale,

and the head of a great family often mentioned in Scottish history. There was also Sir John the Grahame, who became Wallace's bosom friend and greatest confidant. Many of these great noblemen, however, deserted the cause of the country on the approach of John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, the English governor, at the head of a numerous and well-appointed army. They thought that Wallace would be unable to withstand the attack of so many disciplined soldiers, and hastened to submit themselves to the English, for fear of losing their estates. Wallace, however, remained undismayed, and at the head of a considerable army. He had taken up his camp upon the northern side of the river Forth, near the town of Stirling. The river was there crossed by a long wooden bridge, about a mile above the spot where the present bridge is situated.

The English general approached the banks of the river on the southern side. He sent two clergymen to offer a pardon to Wallace and his followers, on condition that they should lay down their arms. But such was not the purpose of the high-minded champion of Scotland.

“Go back to Warenne,” said Wallace, “and tell him we value not the pardon of the King of England. We are not here for the purpose of treating of peace, but of abiding battle, and restoring freedom to our country. Let the English come on—we defy them to their very beards ! ”

The English, upon hearing this haughty answer, called loudly to be led to the attack. Their leader, Sir Richard Lundin, a Scottish knight, who had gone over to the enemy at Irvine, hesitated, for he was a skilful soldier, and he saw that, to approach the Scottish army, his troops must pass over the long, narrow wooden bridge ; so that

those who should get over first might be attacked by Wallace with all his forces, before those who remained behind could possibly come to their assistance. He therefore inclined to delay the battle. But Cressingham the treasurer, who was ignorant and presumptuous, insisted that it was their duty to fight, and put an end to the war at once ; and Lundin gave way to his opinion, although Cressingham, being a churchman, could not be so good a judge of what was fitting as he himself, an experienced officer.

The English army began to cross the bridge, Cressingham leading the van, or foremost division of the army ; for, in those military days, even clergymen wore armour and fought in battle. That took place which Lundin had foreseen. Wallace suffered a considerable part of the English army to pass the bridge, without offering any opposition ; but when about one-half were over, and the bridge was crowded with those who were following, he charged those who had crossed with his whole strength, slew a very great number, and drove the rest into the river Forth, where the greater part were drowned. The remainder of the English army, who were left on the southern bank of the river, fled in great confusion, having first set fire to the wooden bridge, that the Scots might not pursue them. Cressingham was killed in the very beginning of the battle ; and the Scots detested him so much, that they flayed the skin from his dead body, and kept pieces of it, in memory of the revenge they had taken upon the English treasurer. Some say they made saddle-girths of this same skin ; a purpose for which I do not think it could be very fit. It must be owned to have been a dishonourable thing of the Scots to insult thus the dead body of their enemy, and shows that

they must have been then a ferocious and barbarous people.

The remains of Surrey's great army fled out of Scotland after this defeat ; and the Scots, taking arms on all sides, attacked the castles in which the English soldiers continued to shelter themselves, and took most of them by force or stratagem. Many wonderful stories are told of Wallace's exploits on these occasions ; some of which are no doubt true, while others are either invented, or very much exaggerated. It seems certain, however, that he defeated the English in several combats, chased them almost entirely out of Scotland, regained the towns and castles of which they had possessed themselves, and recovered for a time the complete freedom of the country. He even marched into England, and laid Cumberland and Northumberland waste, where the Scottish soldiers, in revenge for the mischief which the English had done in their country, committed great cruelties. Wallace did not approve of their killing the people who were not in arms, and he endeavoured to protect the clergymen and others, who were not able to defend themselves. "Remain with me," he said to the priests of Hexham, a large town in Northumberland, "for I cannot protect you from my soldiers when you are out of my presence." The troops who followed Wallace received no pay, because he had no money to give them ; and that was one great reason why he could not keep them under restraint, or prevent their doing much harm to the defenceless country people. He remained in England more than three weeks, and did a great deal of mischief to the country.

Indeed, it appears, that, though Wallace disapproved of slaying priests, women, and children, he partook of the ferocity of the times so much, as to put to death without

quarter all whom he found in arms. In the north of Scotland, the English had placed a garrison in the strong castle of Dunnottar, which, built on a large and precipitous rock, overhangs the raging sea. Though the place is almost inaccessible, Wallace and his followers found their way into the castle, while the garrison in great terror fled into the church or chapel, which was built on the very verge of the precipice. This did not save them, for Wallace caused the church to be set on fire. The terrified garrison, involved in the flames, ran some of them upon the points of the Scottish swords, while others threw themselves from the precipice into the sea, and swam along to the cliffs, where they hung like sea-fowl, screaming in vain for mercy and assistance.

The followers of Wallace were frightened at this dreadful scene, and falling on their knees before the priests who chanced to be in the army, they asked forgiveness for having committed so much slaughter, within the limits of a church dedicated to the service of God. But Wallace had so deep a sense of the injuries which the English had done to his country, that he only laughed at the contrition of his soldiers—"I will absolve you all, myself," he said. "Are you Scottish soldiers, and do you repent for a trifle like this, which is not half what the invaders deserved at our hands?" So deep-seated was Wallace's feeling of national resentment, that it seems to have overcome, in such instances, the scruples of a temper which was naturally humane.



The Strong Castle of Dunnottar
From a Photograph by Valentine & Sons, Ltd.

CHAPTER III

DEFEAT AND DEATH

What gifts hath Fate for all his chivalry ?
Even such as hearts heroic oftenest win ;
Honour, a friend, anguish, untimely death.

ERNEST MYERS.

EDWARD I. was in Flanders when all these events took place. You may suppose he was very angry when he learned that Scotland, which he thought completely subdued, had risen into a great insurrection against him, defeated his armies, killed his treasurer, chased his soldiers out of their country, and invaded England with a great force. He came back from Flanders in a mighty rage, and determined not to leave that rebellious country until it was finally conquered ; for which purpose he assembled a very fine army, and marched into Scotland.

In the meantime the Scots prepared to defend themselves, and chose Wallace to be Governor, or Protector of the kingdom, because they had no King at the time. He was now titled Sir William Wallace, Protector, or Governor, of the Scottish nation. But although Wallace, as we have seen, was the best soldier and bravest man in Scotland, and therefore the most fit to be placed in command at this critical period, when the King of England was coming against them with such great forces, yet the nobles of Scotland envied him this important situation,

because he was not a man born in high rank, or enjoying a large estate. So great was their jealousy of Sir William Wallace, that many of these great barons did not seem very willing to bring forward their forces, or fight against the English, because they would not have a man of inferior condition to be general. This was base and mean conduct, and it was attended with great disasters to Scotland. Yet, notwithstanding this unwillingness of the great nobility to support him, Wallace assembled a large army ; for the middling, but especially the lower, classes were very much attached to him. He marched boldly against the King of England, and met him near the town of Falkirk. Most of the Scottish army were on foot, because in those days only the nobility and great men of Scotland fought on horseback. The English King, on the contrary, had a very large body of the finest cavalry in the world, Norman and English, all clothed in complete armour. He had also the celebrated archers of England, each of whom was said to carry twelve Scotsmen's lives under his girdle ; because every archer had twelve arrows stuck in his belt, and was expected to kill a man with every arrow.

The Scots had some good archers from the Forest of Ettrick, who fought under command of Sir John Stewart of Bonkill ; but they were not nearly equal in number to the English. The greater part of the Scottish army were on foot, armed with long spears ; they were placed thick and close together, and laid all their spears so close, point over point, that it seemed as difficult to break through them, as through the wall of a strong castle. When the two armies were drawn up facing each other, Wallace said to his soldiers, " I have brought you to the ring, let me see how you can dance " ; meaning, I have

brought you to the decisive field of battle, let me see how bravely you can fight.

The English made the attack. King Edward, though he saw the close ranks, and undaunted appearance, of the Scottish infantry, resolved nevertheless to try whether he could not ride them down with his fine cavalry. He therefore gave his horsemen orders to advance. They charged accordingly, at full gallop. It must have been a terrible thing to have seen these fine horses riding as hard as they could against the long lances, which were held out by the Scots to keep them back ; and a dreadful cry arose when they came against each other.

The first line of cavalry was commanded by the Earl Marshal of England, whose progress was checked by a morass. The second line of English horse was commanded by Antony Beck, the Bishop of Durham, who, nevertheless, wore armour, and fought like a lay baron. He wheeled round the morass ; but when he saw the deep and firm order of the Scots, his heart failed, and he proposed to Sir Ralph Basset of Drayton, who commanded under him, to halt till Edward himself brought up the reserve. “ Go say your mass, bishop,” answered Basset contemptuously, and advanced at full gallop with the second line. However, the Scots stood their ground with their long spears ; many of the foremost of the English horses were thrown down, and the riders were killed as they lay rolling, unable to rise, owing to the weight of their heavy armour. The Scottish horse did not come to the assistance of their infantry, but on the contrary, fled away from the battle. It is supposed that this was owing to the treachery or ill-will of the nobility, who were jealous of Wallace. But it must be considered that the Scottish cavalry were few in number ; and that they

had much worse arms, and weaker horses, than their enemies. The English cavalry attempted again and again to disperse the deep and solid ranks in which Wallace had stationed his foot soldiers. But they were repeatedly beaten off with loss, nor could they make their way through that wood of spears, as it is called by one of the English historians. King Edward then commanded his archers to advance ; and these approaching within arrow-shot of the Scottish ranks, poured on them such close and dreadful volleys of arrows, that it was impossible to sustain the discharge. It happened at the same time, that Sir John Stewart was killed by a fall from his horse ; and the archers of Ettrick Forest, whom he was bringing forward to oppose those of King Edward, were slain in great numbers around him. Their bodies were afterwards distinguished among the slain, as being the tallest and handsomest men of the army.

The Scottish spearmen being thus thrown into some degree of confusion, by the loss of those who were slain by the arrows of the English, the heavy cavalry of Edward again charged with more success than formerly, and broke through the ranks, which were already disordered. Sir John Grahame, Wallace's great friend and companion, was slain, with many other brave soldiers ; and the Scots, having lost a very great number of men, were at length obliged to take to flight.

This fatal battle was fought upon the 22nd July, 1298.

After this fatal defeat of Falkirk, Sir William Wallace seems to have resigned his office of Governor of Scotland.

The King of England possessed so much wealth, and so many means of raising soldiers, that he sent army after army into the poor oppressed country of Scotland, and obliged all its nobles and great men, one after another,

to submit themselves once more to his yoke. Sir William Wallace, alone, or with a very small band of followers, refused either to acknowledge the usurper Edward, or to lay down his arms. He continued to maintain himself among the woods and mountains of his native country for no less than seven years after his defeat at Falkirk, and for more than one year after all the other defenders of Scottish liberty had laid down their arms. Many proclamations were sent out against him by the English, and a great reward was set upon his head ; for Edward did not think he could have any secure possession of his usurped kingdom of Scotland while Wallace lived. At length he was taken prisoner ; and, shame it is to say, a Scotsman, called Sir John Menteith, was the person by whom he was seized and delivered to the English. It is generally said that he was made prisoner at Robroyston, near Glasgow ; and the tradition of the country bears, that the signal made for rushing upon him and taking him at unawares, was, when one of his pretended friends, who betrayed him, should turn a loaf, which was placed upon the table, with its bottom or flat side uppermost. And in after times it was reckoned ill-breeding to turn a loaf in that manner, if there was a person named Menteith in company ; since it was as much as to remind him, that his namesake had betrayed Sir William Wallace, the Champion of Scotland.

Whether Sir John Menteith was actually the person by whom Wallace was betrayed, is not perfectly certain. He was, however, the individual by whom the patriot was made prisoner, and delivered up to the English, for which his name and his memory have been long loaded with disgrace.

Edward having thus obtained possession of the person

whom he considered as the greatest obstacle to his complete conquest of Scotland, resolved to make Wallace an example to all Scottish patriots who should in future venture to oppose his ambitious projects. He caused this gallant defender of his country to be brought to trial in Westminster Hall, before the English judges, and produced him there, crowned, in mockery, with a green garland, because they said he had been king of outlaws and robbers among the Scottish woods. Wallace was accused of having been a traitor to the English crown ; to which he answered, " I could not be a traitor to Edward, for I was never his subject." He was then charged with having taken and burnt towns and castles, with having killed many men and done much violence. He replied, with the same calm resolution, " that it was true he had killed very many Englishmen, but it was because they had come to subdue and oppress his native country of Scotland ; and far from repenting what he had done, he declared he was only sorry that he had not put to death many more of them."

Notwithstanding that Wallace's defence was a good one, both in law and in common sense (for surely every one has not only a right to fight in defence of his native country, but is bound in duty to do so), the English judges condemned him to be executed. So this brave patriot was dragged upon a sledge to the place of execution, where his head was struck off, and his body divided into four quarters, which according to the cruel custom of the time, were exposed upon spikes of iron on London Bridge, and were termed the limbs of a traitor.

No doubt King Edward thought, that by exercising this great severity towards so distinguished a patriot as Sir William Wallace, he should terrify all the Scots into



The Trial of Wallace in Westminster Hall

obedience, and so be able in future to reign over their country without resistance. But though Edward was a powerful, a brave, and a wise king, and though he took the most cautious, as well as the most strict measures, to preserve the obedience of Scotland, yet his claim being founded in injustice and usurpation, was not permitted by Providence to be established in security or peace. Sir William Wallace, that immortal supporter of the independence of his country, was no sooner deprived of his life, in the cruel and unjust manner I have told you, than other patriots arose to assert the cause of Scottish liberty.

CHAPTER IV

A NEW CHAMPION

Others march in freedom's van ;
Canst not thou what others can ?

EBEN. ELLIOTT.

JOHN BALIOL, who resigned the crown of Scotland into the hands of Edward as lord paramount, was very little respected in his own country. He had renounced the kingdom, and had been absent from it for fifteen years, during the greater part of which time he remained a prisoner in the hands of the King of England.

It was therefore natural that such of the people of Scotland as were still determined to fight for the deliverance of their country from the English yoke, should look around for some other king, under whom they might unite themselves, to combat the power of England. The feeling was universal in Scotland, that they would not any longer endure the English government ; and therefore such great Scottish nobles as believed they had right to the crown, began to think of standing forward to claim it.

Amongst these, the principal candidates (supposing John Baliol, by his renunciation and captivity, to have lost all right to the kingdom) were two powerful noblemen. The first was Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, the other was John Comyn, or Cuming, of Badenoch, usually called the Red Comyn, to distinguish him from his kinsman, the Black Comyn, so named from his swarthy complexion.

These two great and powerful barons had taken part with Sir William Wallace in the wars against England ; but, after the defeat of Falkirk, being fearful of losing their great estates, and considering the freedom of Scotland as beyond the possibility of being recovered, both Bruce and Comyn had not only submitted themselves to Edward, and acknowledged his title as King of Scotland, but even borne arms, along with the English, against such of their countrymen as still continued to resist the usurper. But the feelings of Bruce concerning the baseness of this conduct, are said, by the old traditions of Scotland, to have been awakened by the following incident. In one of the numerous battles, or skirmishes, which took place at the time between the English and their adherents on the one side, and the insurgent or patriotic Scots upon the other, Robert the Bruce was present, and assisted the English to gain the victory. After the battle was over, he sat down to dinner among his southern friends and allies without washing his hands, on which there still remained spots of the blood which he had shed during the action. The English lords, observing this, whispered to each other in mockery, “Look at that Scotsman, who is eating his own blood !” Bruce heard what they said, and began to reflect, that the blood upon his hands might be indeed called his own, since it was that of his brave countrymen, who were fighting for the independence of Scotland, whilst he was assisting its oppressors, who only laughed at and mocked him for his unnatural conduct. He was so much shocked and disgusted, that he arose from table, and, going into a neighbouring chapel, shed many tears, and asking pardon of God for the great crime he had been guilty of, made a solemn vow that he would atone for it, by doing all in his power

to deliver Scotland from the foreign yoke. Accordingly, he left, it is said, the English army, and never joined it again, but remained watching an opportunity for restoring the freedom of his country.

Now, this Robert the Bruce was a remarkably brave and strong man : there was no man in Scotland that was thought a match for him except Sir William Wallace ; and now that Wallace was dead, Bruce was held the best warrior in Scotland. He was very wise and prudent, and an excellent general : that is, he knew how to conduct an army, and place them in order for battle, as well or better than any great man of his time. He was generous, too, and courteous by nature ; but he had some faults, which perhaps belonged as much to the fierce period in which he lived as to his own character. He was rash and passionate, and in his passion, he was sometimes relentless and cruel.

Robert the Bruce had fixed his purpose, as I told you, to attempt once again to drive the English out of Scotland, and he desired to prevail upon Sir John the Red Comyn, who was his rival in his pretensions to the throne, to join with him in expelling the foreign enemy by their common efforts. With this purpose, Bruce posted down from London to Dumfries, on the borders of Scotland, and requested an interview with John Comyn. They met in the church of the Minorites in that town, before the high altar. What passed betwixt them is not known with certainty ; but they quarrelled, either concerning their mutual pretensions to the crown, or because Comyn refused to join Bruce in the proposed insurrection against the English ; or, as many writers say, because Bruce charged Comyn with having betrayed to the English his purpose of rising up against King Edward. It is,



"Bruce made solemn Vow that he would atone"

however, certain, that these two haughty barons came to high and abusive words, until at length Bruce, who, I told you, was extremely passionate, forgot the sacred character of the place in which they stood, and struck Comyn a blow with his dagger. Having done this rash deed, he instantly ran out of the church and called for his horse. Two gentlemen of the country, Lindesay and Kirkpatrick, friends of Bruce, were then in attendance on him. Seeing him pale, bloody, and in much agitation, they eagerly enquired what was the matter.

“I doubt,” said Bruce, “that I have slain the Red Comyn.”

“Do you leave such a matter in doubt?” said Kirkpatrick. “I will make sicker!”—that is, I will make certain.

Accordingly, he and his companion Lindesay rushed into the church, and made the matter certain with a vengeance, by despatching the wounded Comyn with their daggers. His uncle, Sir Robert Comyn, was slain at the same time.

This slaughter of Comyn was a rash and cruel action; and the historian of Bruce observes, that it was followed by the displeasure of Heaven; for no man ever went through more misfortunes than Robert Bruce, although he at length rose to great honour.

After the deed was done, Bruce might be called desperate. He had committed an action which was sure to bring down upon him the vengeance of all Comyn’s relations, the resentment of the King of England, and the displeasure of the Church, on account of having slain his enemy within consecrated ground. He determined, therefore, to bid them all defiance at once, and to assert his pretensions to the throne of Scotland. He drew his

own followers together, summoned to meet him such barons as still entertained hopes of the freedom of the country, and was crowned King at the Abbey of Scone, the usual place where the Kings of Scotland assumed their authority.

Every thing relating to the ceremony was hastily performed. A small circlet of gold was hurriedly made, to represent the ancient crown of Scotland, which Edward had carried off to England. The Earl of Fife, whose duty it was to have placed the crown on the King's head, would not give his attendance. But the ceremonial was performed by his sister, Isabella, Countess of Buchan, though without the consent either of her brother or husband. A few barons, whose names ought to be dear to their country, joined Bruce in his attempt to vindicate the independence of Scotland.

Edward was dreadfully incensed when he heard that, after all the pains which he had taken, and all the blood which had been spilled, the Scots were making this new attempt to shake off his authority. Though now old, feeble, and sickly, he made a solemn vow, at a great festival, in presence of all his court, that he would take the most ample vengeance upon Robert the Bruce and his adherents; after which he would never again draw his sword upon a Christian, but would only fight against the unbelieving Saracens for the recovery of the Holy Land. He marched against Bruce accordingly, at the head of a powerful army.

The commencement of Bruce's undertaking was most disastrous. He was crowned on 29th March, 1306. On the 18th May he was excommunicated by the Pope, on account of the murder of Comyn within consecrated ground, a sentence which excluded him from all the bene-

fits of religion, and authorized any one to kill him. Finally, on the 19th June, the new King was completely defeated near Methven by the English Earl of Pembroke. Robert's horse was killed under him in the action, and he was for a moment a prisoner. But he had fallen into the power of a Scottish knight, who, though he served in the English army, did not choose to be the instrument of putting Bruce into their hands, and allowed him to escape.

Bruce, with a few brave adherents, among whom was the young Lord of Douglas, who was afterwards called the Good Lord James, retired into the Highland mountains, where they were chased from one place of refuge to another, often in great danger, and suffering many hardships. The Bruce's wife, now Queen of Scotland, with several other ladies, accompanied her husband and his few followers during their wanderings.

Driven from one place in the Highlands to another, starved out of some districts, and forced from others by the opposition of the inhabitants, Bruce attempted to force his way into Lorn ; but he found enemies everywhere. The M'Dougals, a powerful family, then called Lords of Lorn, were friendly to the English, and putting their men in arms, attacked Bruce and his wandering companions as soon as they attempted to enter their territory. The chief of these M'Dougals, called John of Lorn, hated Bruce on account of his having slain the Red Comyn, to whom this M'Dougal was nearly related. Bruce was again defeated by this chief, through force of numbers, at a place called Dalry ; but he showed, amidst his misfortunes, the greatness of his strength and courage. He directed his men to retreat through a narrow pass, and placing himself last of the party, he fought with and

slew such of the enemy as attempted to press hard on them. Three followers of M'Dougal, a father and two sons, called M'Androsser, all very strong men, when they saw Bruce thus protecting the retreat of his followers, made a vow that they would either kill this redoubted champion, or make him prisoner. The whole three rushed on the King at once. Bruce was on horseback, in the strait pass we have described, betwixt a precipitous rock and a deep lake. He struck the first man who came up and seized his horse's rein, such a blow with his sword, as cut off his hand and freed the bridle. The man bled to death. The other brother had grasped Bruce in the meantime by the leg, and was attempting to throw him from horseback. The King, setting spurs to his horse, made the animal suddenly spring forward, so that the Highlander fell under the horse's feet ; and as he was endeavouring to rise again, Bruce cleft his head in two with his sword. The father, seeing his two sons thus slain, flew desperately at the King, and grasped him by the mantle so close to his body, that he could not have room to wield his long sword. But with the heavy pommel of that weapon, or, as others say, with an iron hammer which hung at his saddle-bow, the King struck this third assailant so dreadful a blow, that he dashed out his brains. Still, however, the Highlander kept his dying grasp on the King's mantle ; so that, to be free of the dead body, Bruce was obliged to undo the brooch, or clasp, by which it was fastened, and leave that, and the mantle itself, behind him. The brooch, which fell thus into the possession of M'Dougal of Lorn, is still preserved in that ancient family, as a memorial that the celebrated Robert Bruce once narrowly escaped falling into the hands of their ancestor.

CHAPTER V

THE DAWN OF HOPE

Be bolde, Be bolde, and everywhere, Be bolde.
SPENSER.

THE King met with many encounters amidst his dangerous and dismal wanderings ; yet, though almost always defeated by the superior numbers of the English, and of such Scots as sided with them, he still kept up his own spirits and those of his followers. He was a better scholar than was usual in those days, when, except clergymen, few people received much education. King Robert had been well instructed in the learning of the times ; and we are told that he sometimes read aloud to his companions, to amuse them when they were crossing the great Highland lakes in such wretched leaky boats as they could find for that purpose.

At last dangers increased so much around the brave King that he was obliged to separate himself from his Queen and her ladies ; for the winter was coming on, and it would be impossible for the women to endure this wandering sort of life when the frost and snow should set in. So Bruce left his Queen, with the Countess of Buchan and others, in the only castle which remained to him, which was called Kildrummie, and is situated near the head of the river Don in Aberdeenshire. The King also left his youngest brother, Nigel Bruce, to defend the castle

against the English ; and he himself, with his second brother Edward, who was a very brave man, but still more rash and passionate than Robert himself, went over to an island called Rachrin, on the coast of Ireland, where Bruce and the few men that followed his fortunes passed the winter of 1306. In the mean time, ill luck seemed to pursue all his friends in Scotland. The castle of Kildrummie was taken by the English, and Nigel Bruce, a beautiful and brave youth, was cruelly put to death by the victors. The ladies who had attended on Robert's Queen, as well as the Queen herself, and the Countess of Buchan, were thrown into strict confinement, and treated with the utmost severity.

The Countess of Buchan, as I before told you, had given Edward great offence by being the person who placed the crown on the head of Robert Bruce. She was imprisoned within the castle of Berwick, in a cage made on purpose. Some Scottish authors have pretended that this cage was hung over the walls with the poor countess, like a parrot's cage out at a window. But this is their own ignorant idea. The cage of the Lady Buchan was a strong wooden and iron piece of frame-work, placed within an apartment, and resembling one of those places in which wild beasts are confined.

The news of the taking of Kildrummie, the captivity of his wife, and the execution of his brother, reached Bruce while he was residing in a miserable dwelling at Rachrin, and reduced him to the point of despair.

It was about this time that an incident took place, which, although it rests only on tradition in families of the name of Bruce, is rendered probable by the manners of the times. After receiving the last unpleasing intelligence from Scotland, Bruce was lying one morning on

his wretched bed, and deliberating with himself whether he had not better resign all thoughts of again attempting to make good his right to the Scottish crown, and, dismissing his followers, transport himself and his brothers to the Holy Land, and spend the rest of his life in fighting against the Saracens ; by which he thought, perhaps, he might deserve the forgiveness of Heaven for the great sin of stabbing Comyn in the church at Dumfries. But then, on the other hand, he thought it would be both criminal and cowardly to give up his attempts to restore freedom to Scotland, while there yet remained the least chance of his being successful in an undertaking, which, rightly considered, was much more his duty than to drive the infidels out of Palestine, though the superstition of his age might think otherwise.

While he was divided betwixt these reflections, and doubtful of what he should do, Bruce was looking upward to the roof of the cabin in which he lay ; and his eye was attracted by a spider, which, hanging at the end of a long thread of its own spinning, was endeavouring, as is the fashion of that creature, to swing itself from one beam in the roof to another, for the purpose of fixing the line on which it meant to stretch its web. The insect made the attempt again and again without success ; and at length Bruce counted that it had tried to carry its point six times, and been as often unable to do so. It came into his head, that he had himself fought just six battles against the English and their allies, and that the poor persevering spider was exactly in the same situation with himself, having made as many trials, and been as often disappointed in what it aimed at. “ Now,” thought Bruce, “ as I have no means of knowing what is best to be done, I will be guided by the luck which shall attend

this spider. If the insect shall make another effort to fix its thread, and shall be successful, I will venture a seventh time to try my fortune in Scotland ; but if the spider shall fail I will go to the wars in Palestine, and never return to my native country more."

While Bruce was forming this resolution, the spider made another exertion with all the force it could muster, and fairly succeeded in fastening its thread to the beam which it had so often in vain attempted to reach. Bruce, seeing the success of the spider, resolved to try his own fortune ; and as he had never before gained a victory, so he never afterwards sustained any considerable or decisive check or defeat. I have often met with people of the name of Bruce, so completely persuaded of the truth of this story, that they would not on any account kill a spider ; because it was that insect which had shown the example of perseverance, and given a signal of good luck to their great namesake.

Having determined to renew his efforts to obtain possession of Scotland, notwithstanding the smallness of the means which he had for accomplishing so great a purpose, the Bruce removed himself and his followers from Rachrin to the island of Arran, which lies in the mouth of the Clyde. The King landed, and enquired of the first woman he met, what armed men were in the island. She returned for answer, that there had arrived there very lately a body of armed strangers, who had defeated an English officer, the governor of the castle of Brathwick, had killed him and most of his men, and were now amusing themselves with hunting about the island. The King, having caused himself to be guided to the woods which these strangers most frequented, there blew his horn repeatedly. Now, the chief of the strangers who

had taken the castle was James Douglas, whom we have already mentioned as one of the best of Bruce's friends, and he was accompanied by some of the bravest of that patriotic band. When he heard Robert Bruce's horn, he knew the sound well, and cried out, that yonder was the King, he knew by his manner of blowing. So he and his companions hastened to meet King Robert, and there was great joy on both sides; whilst at the same time they could not help weeping when they considered their own forlorn condition, and the great loss that had taken place among their friends since they had last parted. But they were stout-hearted men, and looked forward to freeing their country, in spite of all that had yet happened.

The Bruce was now within sight of Scotland, and not distant from his own family possessions, where the people were most likely to be attached to him. He began immediately to form plans with Douglas, how they might best renew their enterprise against the English. The Douglas resolved to go disguised to his own country, and raise his followers, in order to begin their enterprise by taking revenge on an English nobleman called Lord Clifford, upon whom Edward had conferred his estates, and who had taken up his residence in the castle of Douglas.

Bruce, on his part, opened a communication with the opposite coast of Carrick, by means of one of his followers called Cuthbert. This person had directions, that if he should find the countrymen in Carrick disposed to take up arms against the English, he was to make a fire on a headland, or lofty cape, called Turnberry, on the coast of Ayrshire, opposite to the island of Arran. The appearance of a fire on this place was to be a signal for Bruce to put to sea with such men as he had, who were not more

than three hundred in number, for the purpose of landing in Carrick and joining the insurgents.

Bruce and his men watched eagerly for the signal, but for some time in vain. At length a fire on Turnberry-head became visible, and the King and his followers merrily betook themselves to their ships and galleys, concluding their Carrick friends were all in arms, and ready to join with them. They landed on the beach at midnight, where they found their spy Cuthbert alone in waiting for them, with very bad news. Lord Percy, he said, was in the country, with two or three hundred Englishmen, and had terrified the people so much, both by threats and actions, that none of them dared to think of rebelling against King Edward.

“Traitor!” said Bruce, “why, then, did you make the signal?”

“Alas,” replied Cuthbert, “the fire was not made by me, but by some other person, for what purpose I know not; but as soon as I saw it burning, I knew that you would come over, thinking it my signal, and therefore I came down to wait for you on the beach, to tell you how the matter stood.”

King Robert’s first idea was to return to Arran after this disappointment; but his brother Edward refused to go back. He was, as I have told you, a man daring even to rashness. “I will not leave my native land,” he said, “now that I am so unexpectedly restored to it. I will give freedom to Scotland, or leave my carcass on the surface of the land which gave me birth.”

Bruce, also, after some hesitation, determined that since he had been thus brought to the mainland of Scotland, he would remain there, and take such adventure and fortune as Heaven should send him.

CHAPTER VI

ON GUARD

The chase is up ; but they shall know
The stag at bay's a dangerous foe.

SCOTT.

AT one time, a near relation of Bruce's, in whom he entirely confided, was induced by the bribes of the English to attempt to put him to death. This villain, with his two sons, watched the King one morning, till he saw him separated from all his men, excepting a little boy, who waited on him as a page. The father had a sword in his hand, one of the sons had a sword and a spear, the other had a sword and a battle-axe. Now, when the King saw them so well armed, when there were no enemies near, he began to call to mind some hints which had been given to him, that these men intended to murder him. He had no weapons excepting his sword ; but his page had a bow and arrow. He took them both from the little boy, and bade him stand at a distance ; "for," said the King, "if I overcome these traitors, thou shalt have enough of weapons ; but if I am slain by them, you may make your escape, and tell Douglas and my brother to revenge my death." The boy was very sorry, for he loved his master ; but he was obliged to do as he was bidden.

In the meantime the traitors came forward upon Bruce,

that they might assault him at once. The King called out to them, and commanded them to come no nearer, upon peril of their lives ; but the father answered with flattering words, pretending great kindness, and still continuing to approach his person. Then the King again called to them to stand. "Traitors," said he, "ye have sold my life for English gold ; but you shall die if you come one foot nearer to me." With that he bent the page's bow ; and as the old conspirator continued to advance, he let the arrow fly at him. Bruce was an excellent archer ; he aimed his arrow so well, that it hit the father in the eye, and penetrated from that into his brain, so that he fell down dead. Then the two sons rushed on the King. One of them fetched a blow at him with an axe, but missed his stroke, and stumbled, so that the King with his great sword cut him down before he could recover his feet. The remaining traitor ran on Bruce with his spear ; but the King, with a sweep of his sword, cut the steel head off the villain's weapon, and then killed him before he had time to draw his sword. Then the little page came running, very joyful of his master's victory ; and the King wiped his bloody sword, and looking upon the dead bodies, said, "These might have been reputed three gallant men, if they could have resisted the temptation of covetousness."

In the present day, it is not necessary that generals, or great officers, should fight with their own hand, because it is only their duty to direct the movements and exertions of their followers. The artillery and the soldiers shoot at the enemy ; and men seldom mingle together, and fight hand to hand. But in ancient times, kings and great lords were obliged to put themselves into the very front of the battle, and fight like ordinary men, with

the lance and other weapons. It was, therefore, of great consequence that they should be strong men, and dexterous in the use of their arms. Robert Bruce was so remarkably active and powerful that he came through a great many personal dangers, in which he must otherwise have been slain. I will tell you another of his adventures, which I think will amuse you.

After the death of these three traitors, Robert the Bruce continued to keep himself concealed in his own earldom of Carrick, and in the neighbouring country of Galloway, until he should have matters ready for a general attack upon the English. He was obliged, in the mean time, to keep very few men with him, both for the sake of secrecy, and from the difficulty of finding provisions. Now, many of the people of Galloway were unfriendly to Bruce. They lived under the government of one M'Dougal, related to the Lord of Lorn, who, as I before told you, had defeated Bruce at Dalry, and very nearly killed or made him prisoner. These Galloway men had heard that Bruce was in their country, having no more than sixty men with him; so they resolved to attack him by surprise, and for this purpose they got two hundred men together, and brought with them two or three bloodhounds. These animals were trained to chase a man by the scent of his footsteps, as foxhounds chase a fox, or as beagles and harriers chase a hare. Although the dog does not see the person whose trace he is put upon, he follows him over every step he has taken. At that time these bloodhounds, or sleuthhounds, were used for the purpose of pursuing great criminals. The men of Galloway thought themselves secure, that if they missed taking Bruce, or killing him at the first onset, and if he should escape into

the woods, they would find him out by means of these bloodhounds.

The good King Robert Bruce, who was always watchful and vigilant, had received some information of the intention of this party to come upon him suddenly and by night. Accordingly, he quartered his little troop of sixty men on the side of a deep and swift-running river, that had very steep and rocky banks. There was but one ford by which this river could be crossed in that neighbourhood, and that ford was deep and narrow, so that two men could scarcely get through abreast ; the ground on which they were to land on the side where the King was, was steep, and the path which led upwards from the water's edge to the top of the bank, extremely narrow and difficult.

Bruce caused his men to lie down to take some sleep, at a place about half a mile distant from the river, while he himself, with two attendants, went down to watch the ford, through which the enemy must needs pass before they could come to the place where King Robert's men were lying. He stood for some time looking at the ford, and thinking how easily the enemy might be kept from passing there, providing it was bravely defended, when he heard at a distance the baying of a hound, which was always coming nearer and nearer. This was the bloodhound which was tracing the King's steps to the ford where he had crossed, and the two hundred Galloway men were along with the animal, and guided by it. Bruce at first thought of going back to awaken his men ; but then he reflected that it might be only some shepherd's dog. " My men," he said, " are sorely tired ; I will not disturb their sleep for the yelping of a cur, till I know something more of the matter." So he stood and

listened ; and by and by, as the cry of the hound came nearer, he began to hear a trampling of horses, and the voices of men, and the ringing and clattering of armour, and then he was sure the enemy were coming to the river side. Then the King thought, “ If I go back to give my men the alarm, these Galloway men will get through the ford without opposition ; and that would be a pity, since it is a place so advantageous to make defence against them.” So he looked again at the steep path, and the deep river, and he thought that they gave him so much advantage, that he himself could defend the passage with his own hand, until his men came to assist him. His armour was so good and strong, that he had no fear of arrows, and therefore the combat was not so very unequal as it must have otherwise been. He therefore sent his followers to waken his men, and remained alone by the bank of the river.

In the meanwhile, the noise and trampling of the horses increased ; and the moon being bright, Bruce beheld the glancing arms of about two hundred men, who came down to the opposite bank of the river. The men of Galloway, on their part, saw but one solitary figure, guarding the ford, and the foremost of them plunged into the river without minding him. But as they could only pass the ford one by one, the Bruce, who stood high above them on the bank where they were to land, killed the foremost man with a thrust of his long spear, and with a second thrust stabbed the horse, which fell down, kicking and plunging in his agonies, on the narrow path, and so prevented the others who were following from getting out of the river. Bruce had thus an opportunity of dealing his blows at pleasure among them, while they could not strike at him again. In the

confusion, five or six of the enemy were slain, or, having been borne down the current, were drowned in the river. The rest were terrified, and drew back.

But when the Galloway men looked again, and saw they were opposed by only one man, they themselves being so many, they cried out, that their honour would be lost for ever if they did not force their way ; and encouraged each other with loud cries to plunge through, and assault him. But by this time the King's soldiers came up to his assistance, and the Galloway men retreated, and gave up their enterprise.

CHAPTER VII

PURSUED

He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily ;
He had a foot and he could speed—
Hunters watch so narrowly.

SCOTT.

ABOUT the time when the Bruce was yet at the head of but few men, Sir Aymer de Valence, who was Earl of Pembroke, together with John of Lorn, came into Galloway, each of them being at the head of a large body of men. John of Lorn had a bloodhound with him, which it was said had formerly belonged to Robert Bruce himself ; and having been fed by the King with his own hands, it became attached to him, and would follow his footsteps anywhere, as dogs are well known to trace their master's steps, whether they be bloodhounds or not. By means of this hound, John of Lorn thought he should certainly find out Bruce, and take revenge on him for the death of his relation Comyn.

When these two armies advanced upon King Robert, he at first thought of fighting with the English earl ; but becoming aware that John of Lorn was moving round with another large body to attack him in the rear, he resolved to avoid fighting at that time, lest he should be oppressed by numbers. For this purpose, the King divided the men he had with him into three bodies, and

commanded them to retreat by three different ways, thinking the enemy would not know which party to pursue. He also appointed a place at which they were to assemble again. But when John of Lorn came to the place where the army of Bruce had been thus divided, the bloodhound took his course after one of these divisions, neglecting the other two, and then John of Lorn knew that the King must be in that party ; so he also made no pursuit after the two other divisions of the Scots, but followed that which the dog pointed out, with all his men.

The King again saw that he was followed by a large body, and being determined to escape from them, if possible, he made all the people who were with him disperse themselves different ways, thinking thus that the enemy must needs lose trace of him. He kept only one man along with him, and that was his own foster-brother, or the son of his nurse. When John of Lorn came to the place where Bruce's companions had dispersed themselves, the bloodhound, after it had snuffed up and down for a little, quitted the footsteps of all the other fugitives, and ran barking upon the track of two men out of the whole number. Then John of Lorn knew that one of these two must needs be King Robert. Accordingly, he commanded five of his men that were speedy of foot to follow hard, and either make him prisoner, or slay him. The Highlanders started off accordingly, and ran so fast, that they gained sight of Robert and his foster-brother. The King asked his companion what help he could give him, and his foster-brother answered he was ready to do his best. So these two turned on the five men of John of Lorn, and killed them all. It is to be supposed they were better armed than the others were, as well as stronger and more desperate.

But by this time Bruce was very much fatigued, and yet they dared not sit down to take any rest ; for whenever they stopped for an instant, they heard the cry of the bloodhound behind them, and knew by that, that their enemies were coming up fast after them. At length, they came to a wood, through which ran a small river. Then Bruce said to his foster-brother, “ Let us wade down this stream for a great way, instead of going straight across, and so this unhappy hound will lose the scent ; for if we were once clear of him, I should not be afraid of getting away from the pursuers.” Accordingly the King and his attendant walked a great way down the stream, taking care to keep their feet in the water, which could not retain any scent where they had stepped. Then they came ashore on the further side from the enemy, and went deep into the wood before they stopped to rest themselves. In the meanwhile, the hound led John of Lorn straight to the place where the King went into the water, but there the dog began to be puzzled, not knowing where to go next ; for you are well aware that the running water could not retain the scent of a man’s foot, like that which remains on turf. So, John of Lorn seeing the dog was at fault, as it is called, that is, had lost the track of what he pursued, gave up the chase, and returned to join with Aymer de Valence.

But King Robert’s adventures were not yet ended. His foster-brother and he had rested themselves in the wood, but they had got no food, and were become extremely hungry. They walked on, however, in hopes of coming to some habitation. At length, in the midst of the forest, they met with three men who looked like thieves or ruffians. They were well armed, and one of them bore a sheep on his back, which it seemed as if they

had just stolen. They saluted the King civilly ; and he, replying to their salutation, asked them where they were going. The men answered, they were seeking for Robert Bruce, for that they intended to join with him. The King answered, that if they would go with him, he would conduct them where they would find the Scottish King. Then the man who had spoken, changed countenance, and Bruce, who looked sharply at him, began to suspect that the ruffian guessed who he was, and that he and his companions had some design against his person, in order to gain the reward which had been offered for his life.

So he said to them, “ My good friends, as we are not well acquainted with each other, you must go before us, and we will follow near to you.”

“ You have no occasion to suspect any harm from us,” answered the man.

“ Neither do I suspect any,” said Bruce ; “ but this is the way in which I choose to travel.”

The men did as he commanded, and thus they travelled till they came together to a waste and ruinous cottage, where the men proposed to dress some part of the sheep, which their companion was carrying. The King was glad to hear of food ; but he insisted that there should be two fires kindled, one for himself and his foster-brother at one end of the house, the other at the other end for their three companions. The men did as he desired. They broiled a quarter of mutton for themselves, and gave another to the King and his attendant.

They were obliged to eat it without bread or salt ; but as they were very hungry, they were glad to get food in any shape, and partook of it very heartily.

Then so heavy a drowsiness fell on King Robert, that,

for all the danger he was in, he could not resist an inclination to sleep. But first he desired his foster-brother to watch while he slept, for he had great suspicion of their new acquaintances. His foster-brother promised to keep awake, and did his best to keep his word. But the King had not been long asleep ere his foster-brother fell into a deep slumber also, for he had undergone as much fatigue as the King. When the three villains saw the King and his attendant asleep, they made signs to each other, and rising up at once, drew their swords with the purpose to kill them both. But the King slept but lightly, and for as little noise as the traitors made in rising, he was awakened by it, and starting up, drew his sword, and went to meet them. At the same moment he pushed his foster-brother with his foot, to awaken him, and he got on his feet ; but ere he got his eyes cleared to see what was about to happen, one of the ruffians that were advancing to slay the King, killed him with a stroke of his sword. The King was now alone, one man against three, and in the greatest danger of his life ; but his amazing strength, and the good armour which he wore, freed him once more from this great peril, and he killed the three men, one after another. He then left the cottage, very sorrowful for the death of his faithful foster-brother, and took his direction towards the place where he had appointed his men to assemble after their dispersion. It was now near night, and the place of meeting being a farm-house, he went boldly into it, where he found the mistress, an old true-hearted Scotswoman, sitting alone. Upon seeing a stranger enter, she asked him who and what he was. The King answered that he was a traveller, who was journeying through the country.

“ All travellers,” answered the good woman, “ are welcome here, for the sake of one.”

“ And who is that one,” said the King, “ for whose sake you make all travellers welcome ? ”

“ It is our rightful king, Robert the Bruce,” answered the mistress, “ who is the lawful lord of this country ; and although he is now pursued and hunted after with hounds and horns, I hope to live to see him King over all Scotland.”

“ Since you love him so well, dame,” said the King, “ know that you see him before you. I am Robert the Bruce.”

“ You ! ” said the good woman, in great surprise ; “ and wherefore are you thus alone ? —where are all your men ? ”

“ I have none with me at this moment,” answered Bruce, “ and therefore I must travel alone.”

“ But that shall not be,” said the brave old dame, “ for I have two stout sons, gallant and trusty men, who shall be your servants for life and death.”

So she brought her two sons, and though she well knew the dangers to which she exposed them, she made them swear fidelity to the King ; and they afterwards became high officers in his service.

Now, the loyal old woman was getting every thing ready for the King’s supper, when suddenly there was a great trampling of horses heard round the house. They thought it must be some of the English, or John of Lorn’s men, and the good wife called upon her sons to fight to the last for King Robert. But shortly after, they heard the voice of the Good Lord James of Douglas, and of Edward Bruce, the King’s brother, who had come with a hundred and fifty horsemen to this farm-house, accord-

ing to the instructions that the King had left with them at parting.

Robert the Bruce was right joyful to meet his brother, and his faithful friend Lord James ; and had no sooner found himself once more at the head of such a considerable body of followers, than, forgetting hunger and weariness, he began to enquire where the enemy who had pursued them so long had taken up their abode for the night ; “ for,” said he, “ as they must suppose us totally scattered and fled, it is likely that they will think themselves quite secure, and disperse themselves into distant quarters, and keep careless watch.”

“ That is very true,” answered James of Douglas, “ for I passed a village where there are two hundred of them quartered, who had placed no sentinels ; and if you have a mind to make haste, we may surprise them this very night, and do them more mischief than they have been able to do us during all this day’s chase.”

Then there was nothing but mount and ride ; and as the Scots came by surprise on the body of English whom Douglas had mentioned, and rushed suddenly into the village where they were quartered, they easily dispersed and cut them to pieces.

The consequence of these successes of King Robert was, that soldiers came to join him on all sides, and that he obtained several victories both over Sir Aymer de Valence, Lord Clifford, and other English commanders ; until at length the English were afraid to venture into the open country as formerly, unless when they could assemble themselves in considerable bodies. They thought it safer to lie still in the towns and castles which they had garrisoned, and wait till the King of England should once more come to their assistance with a powerful army.

CHAPTER VIII

AT DAGGERS DRAWN

Rude Border chiefs, of mighty name,
And iron soul, who sternly tore
The blossoms from the tree of fame
And purpled deep their tints with gore.

J. LEYDEN.

WHEN King Edward the First heard that Scotland was again in arms against him, he marched down to the Borders, with many threats of what he would do to avenge himself on Bruce and his party, whom he called rebels. But he was now old and feeble, and while he was making his preparations, he was taken very ill, and after lingering a long time, at length died on the 6th July, 1307, at a place in Cumberland called Burgh upon the Sands, in full sight of Scotland, and not three miles from its frontier. His hatred to that country was so inveterate, that his thoughts of revenge seemed to occupy his mind on his deathbed. He made his son promise never to make peace with Scotland until the nation was subdued. He gave also very singular directions concerning the disposal of his dead body. He ordered that it should be boiled in a cauldron till the flesh parted from the bones, and that then the bones should be wrapt up in a bull's hide, and carried at the head of the English army, as often as the Scots attempted to recover their

The Last March of Edward I.



freedom. He thought that he had inflicted such distresses on the Scots, and invaded and defeated them so often, that his very dead bones would terrify them. His son, Edward the Second, did not choose to execute this strange injunction, but caused his father to be buried in Westminster Abbey ; where his tomb is still to be seen, bearing for an inscription, HERE LIES THE HAMMER OF THE SCOTTISH NATION. And, indeed, it was true, that during his life he did them as much injury as a hammer does to the substances which it dashes to pieces.

Edward the Second was neither so brave nor so wise as his father : on the contrary, he was a weak prince, fond of idle amusements, and worthless favourites. It was lucky for Scotland that such was his disposition. He marched a little way into Scotland with the large army which Edward the First had collected, but retired without fighting ; which gave great encouragement to Bruce's party.

Several of the Scottish nobility now took arms in different parts of the country, declared for King Robert, and fought against the English troops and garrisons. The most distinguished of these was the Good Lord James of Douglas, whom we have often mentioned before. Some of his most memorable exploits respected his own castle of Douglas, in which, being an important fortress, and strongly situated, the English had placed a large garrison. James of Douglas saw, with great displeasure, his castle filled with English soldiers, and stored with great quantities of corn, and cattle, and wine, and ale, and other supplies which they were preparing, to enable them to assist the English army with provisions. So he resolved, if possible, to be revenged upon the captain of the garrison and his soldiers.

For this purpose, Douglas went in disguise to the house of one of his old servants, called Thomas Dickson, a strong, faithful, and bold man, and laid a scheme for taking the castle. A holiday was approaching, called Palm Sunday. Upon this day it was common, in the Roman Catholic times, that the people went to church in procession, with green boughs in their hands. Just as the English soldiers, who had marched down from the castle, got into church, one of Lord James's followers raised the cry of *Douglas, Douglas!* which was the shout with which that family always began battle. Thomas Dickson, and some friends whom he had collected, instantly drew their swords, and killed the first Englishman whom they met. But as the signal had been given too soon, Dickson was borne down and slain. Douglas and his men presently after forced their way into the church. The English soldiers attempted to defend themselves; but, being taken by surprise and unprepared, they were, for the greater part, killed or made prisoners, and that so suddenly, and with so little noise, that their companions in the castle never heard of it. So that when Douglas and his men approached the castle gate, they found it open, and that part of the garrison which were left at home, busied cooking provisions for those that were at church. So Lord James got possession of his own castle without difficulty, and he and his men eat up all the good dinner which the English had made ready. But Douglas dared not stay there, lest the English should come in great force and besiege him; and therefore he resolved to destroy all the provisions which the English had stored up in the castle, and to render the place unavailing to them.

It must be owned he executed this purpose in a very cruel and shocking manner, for he was much enraged

at the death of Thomas Dickson. He caused all the barrels containing flour, meal, wheat, and malt, to be knocked in pieces, and their contents mixed on the floor ; then he staved the great hogsheads of wine and ale, and mixed the liquor with the stores ; and, last of all, he killed his prisoners, and flung the dead bodies among this disgusting heap, which his men called, in derision of the English, the Douglas Larder. Then he flung dead horses into the well to destroy it—after which he set fire to the castle ; and finally marched away, and took refuge with his followers in the hills and forests. “ He loved better,” he said, “ to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak.” That is, he loved better to keep in the open field with his men, than to shut himself and them up in castles.

When Clifford, the English general, heard what had happened, he came to Douglas Castle with a great body of men, and rebuilt all the defences which Lord James had destroyed, and cleared out the well, and put a good soldier, named Thirlwall, to command the garrison, and desired him to be on his guard, for he suspected that Lord James would again attack him. And, indeed, Douglas, who did not like to see the English in his father’s castle, was resolved to take the first opportunity of destroying this garrison, as he had done the former. For this purpose he again had recourse to stratagem. He laid a part of his followers in ambush in the wood, and sent fourteen men, disguised like countrymen, driving cattle past the gates of the castle. As soon as Thirlwall saw this, he swore that he would plunder the Scots drovers of their cattle, and came out with a considerable part of his garrison, for that purpose. He had followed the cattle past the place where Douglas was lying concealed, when

all of a sudden the Scotsmen threw off their carriers' cloaks, and appearing in armour, cried the cry of Douglas, and, turning back suddenly, ran to meet the pursuers ; and before Thirlwall could make any defence, he heard the same war-cry behind him, and saw Douglas coming up with those Scots who had been lying in ambush. Thirlwall himself was killed, fighting bravely in the middle of his enemies, and only a very few of his men found their way back to the castle.

When Lord James had thus slain two English commanders or governors of his castle, and was known to have made a vow that he would be revenged on any one who should dare to take possession of his father's house, men became afraid ; and the fortress was called, both in England and Scotland, the Perilous Castle of Douglas, because it proved so dangerous to any Englishman who was stationed there. Now, in those warlike times, the ladies would not marry any man who was not very brave and valiant, so that a coward, let him be ever so rich or high-born, was held in universal contempt. And thus it became the fashion for the ladies to demand proofs of the courage of their lovers, and for those knights who desired to please the ladies, to try some extraordinary deed of arms, to show their bravery and deserve their favour.

At the time we speak of, there was a young lady in England, whom many knights and noblemen asked in marriage, because she was extremely wealthy, and very beautiful. Once upon a holiday she made a great feast, to which she asked all her lovers, and numerous other gallant knights ; and after the feast she arose, and told them that she was much obliged to them for their good opinion of her, but as she desired to have for her husband

a man of the most incontestable bravery, she had formed her resolution not to marry anyone, save one who should show his courage by defending the Perilous Castle of Douglas against the Scots for a year and a day. Now this made some silence among the gentlemen present ; for although the lady was rich and beautiful, yet there was great danger in placing themselves within the reach of the Good Lord James of Douglas. At last a brave young knight started up and said, that for the love of that lady he was willing to keep the Perilous Castle for a year and a day, if the King pleased to give him leave. The King of England was satisfied, and well pleased to get a brave man to hold a place so dangerous. Sir John Wilton was the name of this gallant knight. He kept the castle very safely for some time ; but Douglas at last, by a stratagem, induced him to venture out with a part of the garrison, and then set upon them and slew them. Wilton himself was killed, and a letter from the lady was found in his pocket. Douglas was sorry for his unhappy end, and did not put to death any of the prisoners as he had formerly done, but dismissed them in safety to the next English garrison.

CHAPTER IX

THE TAKING OF THE CASTLES

I. EDINBURGH

It is so hye in syght
Who will it scale, he shall not find it light.

J. HARDYNG.

OTHER great lords, besides Douglas, were now exerting themselves to attack and destroy the English. Amongst those was Sir Thomas Randolph, whose mother was a sister of King Robert. He had joined with the Bruce when he first took up arms. There was a sort of rivalry between Douglas and him, which should do the boldest and most hazardous actions. I will just mention one or two circumstances, which will show you what awful dangers were to be encountered by these brave men, in order to free Scotland from its enemies and invaders.

While Robert Bruce was gradually getting possession of the country, and driving out the English, Edinburgh, the principal town of Scotland, remained, with its strong castle, in possession of the invaders. Sir Thomas Randolph was extremely desirous to gain this important place ; but the castle is situated on a very steep and lofty rock, so that it is difficult or almost impossible even to get up to the foot of the walls, much more to climb over them.



Edinburgh Castle

From a Photograph by Valentine & Sons, Ltd.

So while Randolph was considering what was to be done, there came to him a Scottish gentleman named Francis, who had joined Bruce's standard, and asked to speak with him in private. He then told Randolph, that in his youth he had lived in the castle of Edinburgh, and that his father had then been keeper of the fortress. It happened at that time that Francis was much in love with a lady, who lived in a part of the town beneath the castle, which is called the Grassmarket. Now, as he could not get out of the castle by day to see his mistress, he had practised a way of clambering by night down the castle rock on the south side, and returning at his pleasure ; when he came to the foot of the wall, he made use of a ladder to get over it, as it was not very high at that point, those who built it having trusted to the steepness of the crag ; and, for the same reason, no watch was placed there. Francis had gone and come so frequently in this dangerous manner, that, though it was now long ago, he told Randolph he knew the road so well, that he would undertake to guide a small party of men by night to the bottom of the wall ; and as they might bring ladders with them, there would be no difficulty in scaling it. The great risk was, that of their being discovered by the watchmen while in the act of ascending the cliff, in which case every man of them must have perished.

Nevertheless, Randolph did not hesitate to attempt the adventure. He took with him only thirty men (you may be sure they were chosen for activity and courage), and came one dark night to the foot of the rock, which they began to ascend under the guidance of Francis, who went before them, upon his hands and feet, up one cliff, down another, and round another, where there was scarce room to support themselves. All the while, these thirty

men were obliged to follow in a line, one after the other, by a path that was fitter for a cat than a man. The noise of a stone falling, or a word spoken from one to another, would have alarmed the watchmen. They were obliged, therefore, to move with the greatest precaution. When they were far up the crag, and near the foundation of the wall, they heard the guards going their rounds, to see that all was safe in and about the castle. Randolph and his party had nothing for it but to lie close and quiet, each man under the crag as he happened to be placed, and trust that the guards would pass by without noticing them. And while they were waiting in breathless alarm, they got a new cause of fright. One of the soldiers of the castle, willing to startle his comrades, suddenly threw a stone from the wall, and cried out, "Aha, I see you well!" The stone came thundering down over the heads of Randolph and his men, who naturally thought themselves discovered. If they had stirred, or made the slightest noise, they would have been entirely destroyed; for the soldiers above might have killed every man of them, merely by rolling down stones. But being courageous and chosen men, they remained quiet, and the English soldiers, who thought their comrade was merely playing them a trick (as, indeed, he had no other meaning in what he did and said), passed on, without farther examination.

Then Randolph and his men got up, and came in haste to the foot of the wall, which was not above twice a man's height in that place. They planted the ladders they had brought, and Francis mounted first to show them the way; Sir Andrew Gray, a brave knight, followed him, and Randolph himself was the third man who got over. Then the rest followed. When once they were within

the walls, there was not so much to do, for the garrison were asleep and unarmed, excepting the watch, who were speedily destroyed. Thus was Edinburgh Castle taken in March, 1312-13.

II. LINLITHGOW

When thou hear'st the battle din,
Rush forward, and the passage win,
Secure the drawbridge—storm the port,
And man and guard the castle-court.

SCOTT.

It was not, however, only by the exertions of great and powerful barons, like Randolph and Douglas, that the freedom of Scotland was to be accomplished. The stout yeomanry, and the bold peasantry of the land, who were as desirous to enjoy their cottages in honourable independence, as the nobles were to reclaim their castles and estates from the English, contributed their full share in the efforts which were made to deliver their country from the invaders. I will give you one instance among many.

There was a strong castle near Linlithgow, where an English governor, with a powerful garrison, lay in readiness to support the English cause, and used to exercise much severity upon the Scots in the neighbourhood. There lived at no great distance from this stronghold, a farmer, a bold and stout man, whose name was Binnock, or as it is now pronounced, Binning. This man saw with great joy the progress which the Scots were making in recovering their country from the English, and resolved to do something to help his countrymen, by getting possession, if it were possible, of the castle of Linlithgow. But the place was very strong, situated by the side of a lake, defended not only by gates, which were usually

kept shut against strangers, but also a portcullis. A portcullis is a sort of door formed of cross-bars of iron, like a grate. It has not hinges like a door, but is drawn up by pulleys, and let down when any danger approaches. It may be let go in a moment, and then falls down into the door-way ; and as it has great iron spikes at the bottom, it crushes all that it lights upon ; thus in case of a sudden alarm, a portcullis may be let suddenly fall to defend the entrance, when it is not possible to shut the gates. Binnock knew this very well, but he resolved to be provided against this risk also when he attempted to surprise the castle. So he spoke with some bold courageous countrymen, and engaged them in his enterprise, which he accomplished thus.

Binnock had been accustomed to supply the garrison of Linlithgow with hay, and he had been ordered by the English governor to furnish some cart-loads, of which they were in want. He promised to bring it accordingly ; but the night before he drove the hay to the castle, he stationed a party of his friends, as well armed as possible, near the entrance, where they could not be seen by the garrison, and gave them directions that they should come to his assistance as soon as they should hear his signal, which was to be,—“ Call all, call all ! ” Then he loaded a great waggon with hay. But in the waggon he placed eight strong men, well armed, lying flat on their breasts, and covered over with hay, so that they could not be seen. He himself walked carelessly beside the waggon ; and he chose the stoutest and bravest of his servants to be the driver, who carried at his belt a strong axe or hatchet. In this way Binnock approached the castle early in the morning ; and the watchman, who only saw two men, Binnock being one of them, with a cart of hay, which

they expected, opened the gates, and raised up the portcullis, to permit them to enter the castle. But as soon as the cart had got under the gateway, Binnock made a sign to his servant, who with his axe suddenly cut asunder the *saom*, that is the yoke which fastens the horses to the cart, and the horses finding themselves free, naturally started forward, the cart remaining behind under the arch of the gate. At the same moment, Binnock cried as loud as he could, “Call all, call all!” and drawing the sword, which he had under his country habit, he killed the porter. The armed men then jumped up from under the hay where they lay concealed, and rushed on the English guard. The Englishmen tried to shut the gates, but they could not, because the cart of hay remained in the gateway, and prevented the folding-doors from being closed. The portcullis was also let fall, but the grating was caught on the cart, and so could not drop to the ground. The men who were in ambush near the gate, hearing the signal agreed on, ran to assist those who had leaped out from amongst the hay; the castle was taken, and all the Englishmen killed or made prisoners. King Robert rewarded Binnock by bestowing on him an estate, which his posterity long afterwards enjoyed.

III. ROXBURGH

And many a fortress, town, and tower was won,
And Fame still sounded forth fresh deeds of glory done.
SCOTT.

Roxburgh was then a very large castle, situated near where two fine rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, join each other. Being within five or six miles of England, the English were extremely desirous of retaining it, and the

Scots equally eager to obtain possession of it. I will tell you how it was taken.

It was upon the night of what is called Shrovetide, a holiday which Roman Catholics paid great respect to, and solemnized with much gaiety and feasting. Most of the garrison of Roxburgh castle were drinking and carousing, but still they had set watches on the battlements of the castle, in case of any sudden attack ; for, as the Scots had succeeded in so many enterprises of the kind, and as Douglas was known to be in the neighbourhood, they conceived themselves obliged to keep a very strict guard.

An Englishwoman, the wife of one of the officers, was sitting on the battlements with her child in her arms ; and looking out on the fields below, she saw some black objects, like a herd of cattle, straggling near the foot of the wall, and approaching the ditch or moat of the castle. She pointed them out to the sentinel, and asked him what they were.—“ Pooh, pooh,” said the soldier, “ it is farmer such a one’s cattle ” (naming a man whose farm lay near to the castle) ; “ the good man is keeping a jolly Shrovetide, and has forgot to shut up his bullocks in their yard ; but if the Douglas come across them before morning, he is likely to rue his negligence.” Now these creeping objects which they saw from the castle wall were no real cattle, but Douglas himself and his soldiers, who had put black cloaks above their armour, and were creeping about on hands and feet, in order, without being observed, to get so near to the foot of the castle wall as to be able to set ladders to it. The poor woman, who knew nothing of this, sat quietly on the wall, and began to sing to her child. You must know that the name of Douglas had become so terrible to the English, that the



G. Demaray Hammond

“You are not so sure of that!”

women used to frighten their children with it, and say to them when they behaved ill, that they "would make the Black Douglas take them." And this soldier's wife was singing to her child,

" Hush ye, hush ye, little pet ye,
Hush ye, hush ye, do not fret ye,
The Black Douglas shall not get ye."

" You are not so sure of that," said a voice close beside her. She felt at the same time a heavy hand, with an iron glove, laid on her shoulder, and when she looked round, she saw the very Black Douglas she had been singing about, standing close beside her, a tall, swarthy, strong man. At the same time, another Scotsman was seen ascending the walls, near to the sentinel. The soldier gave the alarm, and rushed at the Scotsman, whose name was Simon Ledehouse, with his lance ; but Simon parried the stroke, and closing with the sentinel, struck him a deadly blow with his dagger. The rest of the Scots followed up to assist Douglas and Ledehouse, and the castle was taken. Many of the soldiers were put to death, but Douglas protected the woman and the child. I dare say she made no more songs about the Black Douglas.

CHAPTER X

BEFORE THE BATTLE

They come ! they come ! the knell is rung
Of us or them ;
Wide o'er their march the pomp is flung
Of gold and gem.

EBEN. ELLIOTT.

THE English now possessed scarcely any place of importance in Scotland, excepting Stirling, which was besieged, or rather blockaded, by Edward Bruce, the King's brother. To blockade a town or castle, is to quarter an army around it, so as to prevent those within from getting provisions. This was done by the Scots before Stirling, till Sir Philip Mowbray, who commanded the castle, finding that he was likely to be reduced to extremity for want of provisions, made an agreement with Edward Bruce that he would surrender the place, provided he were not relieved by the King of England before midsummer. Sir Edward agreed to these terms, and allowed Mowbray to go to London, to tell King Edward of the conditions he had made. But when King Robert heard what his brother had done, he thought it was too great a risk, since it obliged him to venture a battle with the full strength of Edward II., who had under him England, Ireland, Wales, and great part of France, and could within the time allowed assemble a much more powerful army than the Scots could, even if all Scotland

were fully under the King's authority. Sir Edward answered his brother with his naturally audacious spirit, "Let Edward bring every man he has, we will fight them, were they more." The King admired his courage, though it was mingled with rashness.—"Since it is so, brother," he said, "we will manfully abide battle, and assemble all who love us, and value the freedom of Scotland, to come with all the men they have, and help us to oppose King Edward, should he come with his army to rescue Stirling."

King Edward II., as we have already said, was not a wise and brave man like his father, but a foolish prince, who was influenced by unworthy favourites, and thought more of pleasure than of governing his kingdom. His father Edward I. would have entered Scotland at the head of a large army, before he had left Bruce time to reconquer so much of the country. But we have seen, that, very fortunately for the Scots, that wise and skilful, though ambitious King, died when he was on the point of marching into Scotland. His son Edward had afterwards neglected the Scottish war, and thus lost the opportunity of defeating Bruce, when his force was small. But now when Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor of Stirling, came to London, to tell the King that Stirling, the last Scottish town of importance which remained in possession of the English, was to be surrendered if it were not relieved by force of arms before midsummer, then all the English nobles called out, it would be a sin and shame to permit the fair conquest which Edward I. had made, to be forfeited to the Scots for want of fighting. It was, therefore, resolved, that the King should go himself to Scotland, with as great forces as he could possibly muster.

King Edward the Second, therefore, assembled one of the greatest armies which a King of England ever commanded. There were troops brought from all his dominions. Many brave soldiers from the provinces which the King of England possessed in France,—many Irish, many Welsh,—and all the great English nobles and barons, with their followers, were assembled in one great army. The number was not less than one hundred thousand men.

King Robert the Bruce summoned all his nobles and barons to join him, when he heard of the great preparation which the King of England was making. They were not so numerous as the English by many thousand men. In fact, his whole army did not very much exceed thirty thousand, and they were much worse armed than the wealthy Englishmen ; but then, Robert, who was at their head, was one of the most expert generals of the time ; and the officers he had under him, were his brother Edward, his nephew Randolph, his faithful follower the Douglas, and other brave and experienced leaders, who commanded the same men that had been accustomed to fight and gain victories under every disadvantage of situation and numbers.

The King, on his part, studied how he might supply, by address and stratagem, what he wanted in numbers and strength. He knew the superiority of the English, both in their heavy-armed cavalry, which were much better mounted and armed than that of the Scots, and in their archers, who were better trained than any others in the world. Both these advantages he resolved to provide against. With this purpose, he led his army down into a plain near Stirling, called the Park, near which, and beneath it, the English army must needs

pass through a boggy country, broken with water-courses, while the Scots occupied hard dry ground. He then caused all the ground upon the front of his line of battle, where cavalry were likely to act, to be dug full of holes, about as deep as a man's knee. They were filled with light brushwood, and the turf was laid on the top, so that it appeared a plain field, while in reality it was all full of these pits as a honeycomb is of holes. He also, it is said, caused steel spikes, called caltrops, to be scattered up and down in the plain, where the English cavalry were most likely to advance, trusting in that manner to lame and destroy their horses.

When the Scottish army was drawn up, the line stretched north and south. On the south, it was terminated by the banks of the brook called Bannockburn, which are so rocky, that no troops could attack them there. On the left, the Scottish line extended near to the town of Stirling. Bruce reviewed his troops very carefully ; all the useless servants, drivers of carts, and such like, of whom there were very many, he ordered to go behind a height, afterwards, in memory of the event, called the Gillies' Hill, that is, the Servants' Hill. He then spoke to the soldiers, and expressed his determination to gain the victory, or to lose his life on the field of battle. He desired that all those who did not propose to fight to the last should leave the field before the battle began, and that none should remain except those who were determined to take the issue of victory or death, as God should send it.

When the main body of his army was thus placed in order, the King posted Randolph, with a body of horse, near to the church of St Ninian's, commanding him to use the utmost diligence to prevent any succours from

being thrown into Stirling Castle. He then despatched James of Douglas, and Sir Robert Keith, the Mareschal of the Scottish army, in order that they might survey, as nearly as they could, the English force, which was now approaching from Falkirk. They returned with information, that the approach of that vast host was one of the most beautiful and terrible sights which could be seen,—that the whole country seemed covered with men-at-arms on horse and foot,—that the number of standards, banners, and pennons made so gallant a show, that the bravest and most numerous host in Christendom might be alarmed to see King Edward moving against them.

It was upon the 23rd of June (1314) the King of Scotland heard the news, that the English were approaching Stirling. He drew out his army, therefore, in the order which he had before resolved on. After a short time, Bruce, who was looking out anxiously for the enemy, saw a body of English cavalry trying to get into Stirling from the eastward. This was the Lord Clifford, who, with a chosen body of eight hundred horse, had been detached to relieve the castle.

“See, Randolph,” said the King to his nephew, “there is a rose fallen from your chaplet.” By this he meant, that Randolph had lost some honour, by suffering the enemy to pass where he had been stationed to hinder them. Randolph made no reply, but rushed against Clifford with little more than half his number. The Scots were on foot. The English turned to charge them with their lances, and Randolph drew up his men in close order to receive the onset. He seemed to be in so much danger, that Douglas asked leave to go and assist him. The King refused him permission.

“ Let Randolph,” he said, “ redeem his own fault ; I cannot break the order of battle for his sake.” Still the danger appeared greater, and the English horse seemed entirely to encompass the small handful of Scottish infantry. “ So please you,” said Douglas to the King, “ my heart will not suffer me to stand idle and see Randolph perish—I must go to his assistance.” He rode off accordingly ; but long before they had reached the place of combat, they saw the English horses galloping off, many with empty saddles.

“ Halt ! ” said Douglas to his men, “ Randolph has gained the day ; since we were not soon enough to help him in the battle, do not let us lessen his glory by approaching the field.” Now that was nobly done ; especially as Douglas and Randolph were always contending which should rise highest in the good opinion of the King and the nation.

The van of the English army now came in sight, and a number of their bravest knights drew near to see what the Scots were doing. They saw King Robert dressed in his armour, and distinguished by a gold crown, which he wore over his helmet. He was not mounted on his great war-horse, because he did not expect to fight that evening. But he rode on a little pony up and down the ranks of his army, putting his men in order, and carried in his hand a sort of battle-axe made of steel. When the King saw the English horsemen draw near, he advanced a little before his own men, that he might look at them more nearly.

There was a knight among the English, called Sir Henry de Bohun, who thought this would be a good opportunity to gain great fame to himself, and put an end to the war, by killing King Robert. The King being

poorly mounted, and having no lance, Bohun galloped on him suddenly and furiously, thinking, with his long spear, and his tall powerful horse, easily to bear him down to the ground. King Robert saw him, and permitted him to come very near, then suddenly turned his pony a little to one side, so that Sir Henry missed him with the lance-point, and was in the act of being carried past him by the career of his horse. But as he passed, King Robert rose up in his stirrups, and struck Sir Henry on the head with his battle-axe so terrible a blow, that it broke to pieces his iron helmet as if it had been a nut-shell, and hurled him from his saddle. He was dead before he reached the ground. This gallant action was blamed by the Scottish leaders, who thought Bruce ought not to have exposed himself to so much danger when the safety of the whole army depended on him. The King only kept looking at his weapon, which was injured by the force of the blow, and said, "I have broken my good battle-axe."

CHAPTER XI

BANNOCKBURN

Now, Scotland ! shortly shalt thou see
With God's high will, thy children free,
And vengeance on thy foes !

SCOTT.

THE next morning, being the 24th June, at break of day, the battle began in terrible earnest. The English as they advanced saw the Scots getting into line. The Abbot of Inchaffray walked through their ranks barefooted, and exhorted them to fight for their freedom. They kneeled down as he passed, and prayed to Heaven for victory. King Edward, who saw this, called out, "They kneel down—they are asking forgiveness." "Yes," said a celebrated English baron called Ingelram de Umphraville, "but they ask it from God, not from us—these men will conquer, or die upon the field."

The English King ordered his men to begin the battle. The archers then bent their bows, and began to shoot so closely together, that the arrows fell like flakes of snow on a Christmas day. They killed many of the Scots, and might, as at Falkirk and other places, have decided the victory; but Bruce, as I told you before, was prepared for them. He had in readiness a body of men-at-arms, well mounted, who rode at full gallop among the archers, and as they had no weapons save their bows

and arrows, which they could not use when they were attacked hand to hand, they were cut down in great numbers by the Scottish horsemen, and thrown into total confusion.

The fine English cavalry then advanced to support their archers, and to attack the Scottish line. But coming over the ground which was dug full of pits, the horses fell into these holes, and the riders lay tumbling about, without any means of defence, and unable to rise, from the weight of their armour. The Englishmen began to fall into general disorder ; and the Scottish King, bringing up more of his forces, attacked and pressed them still more closely.

On a sudden, while the battle was obstinately maintained on both sides, an event happened which decided the victory. The servants and attendants on the Scottish camp had, as I told you, been sent behind the army to a place afterwards called the Gillies' Hill. But when they saw that their masters were likely to gain the day, they rushed from their place of concealment with such weapons as they could get, that they might have their share in the victory and in the spoil. The English, seeing them come suddenly over the hill, mistook this disorderly rabble for another army coming to sustain the Scots, and, losing all heart, began to shift every man for himself. Edward left the field as fast as he could ride. A valiant knight, Sir Giles de Argentine, much renowned in the wars of Palestine, attended the King till he got him out of the press of the combat. But he would retreat no farther. "It is not my custom," he said, "to fly." With that he took leave of the King, set spurs to his horse, and calling out his war-cry of Argentine ! Argentine ! he rushed into the thickest of the Scottish ranks, and was killed.

Edward first fled to Stirling Castle, and entreated admittance ; but Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor, reminded the fugitive Sovereign that he was obliged to surrender the castle next day, so Edward was fain to fly through the Torwood, closely pursued by Douglas with a body of cavalry. An odd circumstance happened during the chase, which showed how loosely some of the Scottish Barons of that day held their political opinions. As Douglas was riding furiously after Edward, he met a Scottish knight, Sir Laurence Abernethy, with twenty horse. Sir Laurence had hitherto owned the English interest, and was bringing this band of followers to serve King Edward's army. But learning from Douglas that the English King was entirely defeated, he changed sides on the spot, and was easily prevailed upon to join Douglas in pursuing the unfortunate Edward, with the very followers whom he had been leading to join his standard.

Douglas and Abernethy continued the chase, not giving King Edward time to alight from horseback even for an instant, and followed him as far as Dunbar, where the English had still a friend in the governor, Patrick Earl of March. The earl received Edward in his forlorn condition, and furnished him with a fishing skiff, or small ship, in which he escaped to England, having entirely lost his fine army, and a great number of his bravest nobles.

The English never before or afterwards, whether in France or Scotland, lost so dreadful a battle as that of Bannockburn, nor did the Scots ever gain one of the same importance. Many of the best and bravest of the English nobility and gentry, as I have said, lay dead on the field ; a great many more were made prisoners ; and the whole of King Edward's immense army was dispersed or destroyed.

The English, after this great defeat, were no longer in a condition to support their pretensions to be masters of Scotland, or to continue, as they had done for nearly twenty years, to send armies into that country to overcome it. On the contrary, they became for a time scarce able to defend their own frontiers against King Robert and his soldiers.

Thus did Bruce arise from the condition of an exile, hunted with bloodhounds like a stag or beast of prey, to the rank of an independent sovereign, universally acknowledged to be one of the wisest and bravest kings who then lived. The nation of Scotland was also raised once more from the situation of a distressed and conquered province to that of a free and independent state, governed by its own laws, and subject to its own princes.

CHAPTER XII

THE MERCIFUL KNIGHT

He was a veray parfit gentil knight.

CHAUCER.

YOU will be naturally curious to hear what became of Edward, the brother of Robert Bruce, who was so courageous, and at the same time so rash. The Irish, at that time, had been almost fully conquered by the English ; but becoming weary of them, the Irish chiefs, or at least a great many of them, invited Edward Bruce to come over, drive out the English, and become their king. He was willing enough to go, for he had always a high courageous spirit, and desired to obtain fame and dominion by fighting. Edward Bruce was as good a soldier as his brother, but not so prudent and cautious ; for, except in the affair of killing the Red Comyn, which was a wicked and violent action, Robert Bruce, in his latter days, showed himself as wise as he was courageous. However, he was well contented that his brother Edward, who had always fought so bravely for him, should be raised up to be King of Ireland. Therefore King Robert not only gave him an army to assist in making the conquest, but passed over the sea to Ireland himself in person, with a considerable body of troops to assist him. The Bruces gained several battles, and penetrated far into Ireland ; but the English forces were too numerous, and so many of the Irish joined with them

rather than with Edward Bruce, that King Robert and his brother were obliged to retreat before them.

The chief commander of the English was a great soldier, called Sir Edmund Butler, and he had assembled a much greater army than Edward Bruce and his brother King Robert had to oppose to him. The Scots were obliged to retreat every morning, that they might not be forced to battle by an army more numerous than their own.

I have often told you, that King Robert the Bruce was a wise and a good prince. But a circumstance happened during this retreat, which showed he was also a kind and humane man. It was one morning, when the English and their Irish auxiliaries were pressing hard upon Bruce, who had given his army orders to continue a hasty retreat ; for to have risked a battle with a much more numerous army, and in the midst of a country which favoured his enemies, would have been extremely imprudent. On a sudden, just as King Robert was about to mount his horse, he heard a woman shrieking in despair. “ What is the matter ? ” said the King ; and he was informed by his attendants, that a poor woman, a laundress, or washer-woman, mother of an infant who had just been born, was about to be left behind the army, as being too weak to travel. The mother was shrieking for fear of falling into the hands of the Irish, who were accounted very cruel, and there were no carriages nor means of sending the woman and her infant on in safety. They must needs be abandoned if the army retreated.

King Robert was silent for a moment when he heard this story, being divided betwixt the feelings of humanity, occasioned by the poor woman’s distress, and the danger to which a halt would expose his army. At last he looked

round on his officers, with eyes which kindled like fire. "Ah, gentlemen," he said, "never let it be said that a man who was born of a woman, and nursed by a woman's tenderness, should leave a mother and an infant to the mercy of barbarians! In the name of God, let the odds and the risk be what they will, I will fight Edmund Butler rather than leave these poor creatures behind me. Let the army, therefore, draw up in line of battle, instead of retreating."

The story had a singular conclusion; for the English general, seeing that Robert the Bruce halted and offered him battle, and knowing that the Scottish King was one of the best generals then living, conceived that he must have received some large supply of forces, and was afraid to attack him. And thus Bruce had an opportunity to send off the poor woman and her child, and then to retreat at his leisure, without suffering any inconvenience from the halt.

But Robert was obliged to leave the conquest of Ireland to his brother Edward, being recalled by pressing affairs to his own country. Edward, who was rash as he was brave, engaged, against the advice of his best officers, in battle with an English general, called Sir Piers de Birmingham. The Scots were surrounded on all sides, but continued to defend themselves valiantly, and Edward Bruce showed the example by fighting in the very front of the battle. At length a strong English champion, called John Maupas, engaged Edward hand to hand; and they fought till they killed each other. Maupas was found lying after the battle upon the body of Bruce; both were dead men. After Edward Bruce's death, the Scots gave up further attempts to conquer Ireland.

CHAPTER XIII

A BORDER RAID

Then mounte ! then mounte, brave gallants, all,
And don your helmes amaine :
Death's couriers, Fame and Honour, call
Us to the field again.

W. MOTHERWELL.

EDWARD II. King of England, died in 1327, and was succeeded by his son Edward III. He turned out afterwards to be one of the wisest and bravest kings whom England ever had ; but when he first mounted the throne he was very young, and under the entire management of his mother, who governed by means of a wicked favourite called Mortimer.

The war between the English and the Scots still lasting at the time, Bruce sent his two great commanders, the Good Lord James Douglas, and Thomas Randolph Earl of Murray, to lay waste the counties of Northumberland and Durham, and distress the English as much as they could.

Their soldiers were about twenty thousand in number, all lightly armed, and mounted on horses that were but small in height, but excessively active. The men themselves carried no provision, except a bag of oatmeal ; and each had at his saddle a small plate of iron called a girdle, on which, when they pleased, they could bake the oatmeal into cakes. They killed the cattle of the

English, as they travelled through the country, roasted the flesh on wooden spits, or boiled it in the skins of the animals themselves, putting in a little water with the beef, to prevent the fire from burning the hide to pieces. This was rough cookery. They made their shoes, or rather sandals, in as coarse a way ; cutting them out of the raw hides of the cattle, and fitting them to their ankles, like what are now called short gaiters. As this sort of buskin had the hairy side of the hide outermost, the English called those who wore them *rough-footed* Scots, and sometimes, from the colour of the hide, *red-shanks*.

As such forces needed to carry nothing with them, either for provisions or ammunition, the Scots moved with amazing speed, from mountain to mountain, and from glen to glen, pillaging and destroying the country wherever they came. In the mean while, the young King of England pursued them with a much larger army ; but as it was encumbered by the necessity of carrying provisions in great quantities, and by the slow motions of men in heavy armour, they could not come up with the Scots, although they saw every day the smoke of the houses and villages which they were burning. The King of England was extremely angry ; for, though only a boy of sixteen years old, he longed to fight the Scots, and to chastise them for the mischief they were doing to his country ; and at length he grew so impatient that he offered a large reward to any one who would show him where the Scottish army was.

At length, after the English host had suffered severe hardships, from want of provisions, and fatiguing journeys through fords, and swamps, and morasses, a gentleman named Rokeby came into the camp, and claimed the

reward which the King had offered. He told the King that he had been made prisoner by the Scots, and that they had said they should be as glad to meet the English King as he to see them. Accordingly, Rokeby guided the English army to the place where the Scots lay encamped.

But the English King was no nearer to the battle which he desired ; for Douglas and Randolph, knowing the force and numbers of the English army, had taken up their camp on a steep hill, at the bottom of which ran a deep river, called the Wear, having a channel filled with large stones, so that there was no possibility for the English to attack the Scots without crossing the water, and then climbing up the steep hill in the very face of their enemy ; a risk which was too great to be attempted.

Then the King sent a message of defiance to the Scottish generals, inviting them either to draw back their forces, and allow him freedom to cross the river, and time to place his army in order of battle on the other side, that they might fight fairly, or offering, if they liked it better, to permit them to cross over to his side without opposition, that they might join battle on a fair field. Randolph and Douglas did nothing but laugh at this message. They said, that when they fought, it should be at their own pleasure, and not because the King of England chose to ask for a battle. They reminded him, insultingly, how they had been in his country for many days, burning, taking spoil, and doing what they thought fit. If the King was displeased with this, they said, he must find his way across the river to fight them, the best way he could.

The English King, determined not to quit sight of the Scots, encamped on the opposite side of the river to watch their motions, thinking that want of provisions would

oblige them to quit their strong position on the mountains. But the Scots once more showed Edward their dexterity in marching, by leaving their encampment, and taking up another post, even stronger and more difficult to approach than the first which they had occupied. King Edward followed, and again encamped opposite to his dexterous and troublesome enemies, desirous to bring them to a battle, when he might hope to gain an easy victory, having more than double the number of the Scottish army, all troops of the very best quality.

While the armies lay thus opposed to each other, Douglas resolved to give the young King of England a lesson in the art of war. At the dead of night, he left the Scottish camp with a small body of chosen horse, not above two hundred, well armed. He crossed the river in deep silence, and came to the English camp, which was but carelessly guarded. Seeing this, Douglas rode past the English sentinels as if he had been an officer of the English army, saying,—“ Ha, Saint George ! you keep bad watch here.”—In those days, you must know, the English used to swear by Saint George, as the Scots did by Saint Andrew. Presently after, Douglas heard an English soldier, who lay stretched by the fire, say to his comrade,—“ I cannot tell what is to happen to us in this place ; but, for my part, I have a great fear of the Black Douglas playing us some trick.”

“ You shall have cause to say so,” said Douglas to himself.

When he had thus got into the midst of the English camp without being discovered, he drew his sword, and cut asunder the ropes of a tent, calling out his usual war-cry,—“ Douglas ! Douglas ! English thieves, you

are all dead men.” His followers immediately began to cut down and overturn the tents, cutting and stabbing the English soldiers as they endeavoured to get to arms.

Douglas forced his way to the pavilion of the King himself, and very nearly carried that young prince prisoner out of the middle of his great army. Edward’s chaplain, however, and many of his household, stood to arms bravely in his defence, while the young King escaped by creeping away beneath the canvas of his tent. The chaplain and several of the King’s officers were slain; but the whole camp was now alarmed and in arms, so that Douglas was obliged to retreat, which he did by bursting through the English at the side of the camp opposite to that by which he had entered. Being separated from his men in the confusion, he was in great danger of being slain by an Englishman who encountered him with a huge club. This man he killed, but with considerable difficulty; and then blowing his horn to collect his soldiers, who soon gathered around him, he returned to the Scottish camp, having sustained very little loss.

Edward, much mortified at the insult which he had received, became still more desirous of chastising those audacious adversaries; and one of them at least was not unwilling to afford him an opportunity of revenge. This was Thomas Randolph, Earl of Murray. He asked Douglas when he returned to the Scottish camp, “What he had done?”—“We have drawn some blood.”—“Ah,” said the earl, “had we gone all together to the night attack, we should have discomfited them.”—“It might well have been so,” said Douglas, “but the risk would have been too great.”—“Then will we fight them in open battle,” said Randolph, “for if we remain here,

we shall in time be famished for want of provisions."—

"Not so," replied Douglas; "we will deal with this great army of the English as the fox did with the fisherman in the fable."—"And how was that?" said the Earl of Murray.—Hereupon the Douglas told him this story:—

"A fisherman," he said, "had made a hut by a river side, that he might follow his occupation of fishing. Now, one night he had gone out to look after his nets, leaving a small fire in his hut; and when he came back, behold there was a fox in the cabin, taking the liberty to eat one of the finest salmon he had taken. 'Ho, Mr Robber!' said the fisherman, drawing his sword, and standing in the door-way to prevent the fox's escape, 'you shall presently die the death.' The poor fox looked for some hole to get out at, but saw none; whereupon he pulled down with his teeth a mantle, which was lying on the bed, and dragged it across the fire. The fisherman ran to snatch his mantle from the fire—the fox flew out at the door with the salmon;—and so," said Douglas, "shall we escape the great English army by subtilty, and without risking battle with so large a force."

Randolph agreed to act by Douglas's counsel, and the Scottish army kindled great fires through their encampment, and made a noise and shouting, and blowing of horns, as if they meant to remain all night there, as before. But in the meantime, Douglas had caused a road to be made through two miles of a great morass which lay in their rear. This was done by cutting down to the bottom of the bog, and filling the trench with faggots of wood. Without this contrivance it would have been impossible that the army could have crossed; and through this passage, which the English never suspected, Douglas and Randolph, and all their men, moved

at the dead of night. They did not leave so much as an errand-boy behind, and so bent their march towards Scotland, leaving the English disappointed and affronted. Great was their wonder in the morning, when they saw the Scottish camp empty, and found no living men in it, but two or three English prisoners tied to trees, whom they had left with an insulting message to the King of England, saying, “ If he were displeased with what they had done, he might come and revenge himself in Scotland.”

The place where the Scots fixed this famous encampment, was in the forest of Weardale, in the bishopric of Durham ; and the road which they cut for the purpose of their retreat, is still called the *Shorn Moss*.

After this a peace was concluded with Robert Bruce, on terms highly honourable to Scotland ; for the English King renounced all pretensions to the sovereignty of the country, and, moreover, gave his sister, a princess called Joanna, to be wife to Robert Bruce’s son, called David. This treaty was very advantageous for the Scots. It was called the treaty of Northampton, because it was concluded at that town in the year 1328.

CHAPTER XIV

GOOD LORD JAMES AND THE BRUCE'S HEART

Fain would I wend a pilgrim
Forth over land and sea,
Where God's dear Son for sinners died—
Alas it must not be !
But if thy love be stedfast
As it was proved of yore,—
When these few struggling pulses
Are stilled, and all is o'er,
Unclose this lifeless bosom,
Take then this heart of mine
And bear it safely for my sake
To holy Palestine.

M. B. SMEDLEY.

KING ROBERT was not aged more than fifty-four years, but he had fallen into bad health, caused by the hardships which he sustained during his youth, and at length he became very ill. Finding that he could not recover, he assembled around his bedside the nobles and counsellors in whom he most trusted. He told them, that now, being on his deathbed, he sorely repented all his misdeeds, and particularly, that he had, in his passion, killed Comyn with his own hand, in the church and before the altar. He said that if he had lived, he had intended to go to Jerusalem, to make war upon the Saracens who held the Holy Land, as some expiation for the evil deeds he had done. But since he was about to die, he requested of his dearest friend and bravest warrior, and that was the

Good Lord James Douglas, that he should carry his heart to the Holy Land.

To make you understand the meaning of this request, I must tell you, that at this time a people called Saracens, who believed in the false prophet Mahomet, had obtained by conquest possession of Jerusalem, and the other cities and places which are mentioned in the Holy Scripture ; and the Christians of Europe, who went thither as pilgrims to worship at these places, where so many miracles had been wrought, were insulted by these heathen Saracens. Hence many armies of Christians went from their own countries out of every kingdom of Europe, to fight against these Saracens : and believed that they were doing a great service to religion, and that what sins they had committed would be pardoned by God Almighty, because they had taken a part in this which they called a holy warfare. You may remember that Bruce thought of going upon this expedition when he was in despair of recovering the crown of Scotland ; and now he desired his heart to be carried to Jerusalem after his death, and requested Lord James of Douglas to take the charge of it. Douglas wept bitterly as he accepted this office,—the last mark of the Bruce's confidence and friendship.

The King soon afterwards expired ; and his heart was taken out from his body and embalmed, that is, prepared with spices and perfumes, that it might remain a long time fresh and uncorrupted. Then the Douglas caused a case of silver to be made, into which he put the Bruce's heart, and wore it around his neck.

“ It was Lord James of Douglas
Set sail across the brine,
With a warrior band, to seek the land
Of holy Palestine.

A nobler knight than the good Lord James,
In troth is seldom seen :
His words, though few, were straight and true
As his sword so bright and keen.¹

Lord James set forward for the Holy Land, with a gallant train of the bravest men in Scotland, who, to show their value and sorrow for their brave King Robert, resolved to attend his heart to the city of Jerusalem. It had been much better for Scotland if the Douglas and his companions had stayed at home to defend their own country, which was shortly afterwards in great want of their assistance.

Neither did Douglas ever get to the end of his journey. In going to Palestine, he landed in Spain, where the Saracen King, or Sultan of Grenada, called Osmyn, was invading the realms of Alphonso, the Spanish King of Castile. King Alphonso received Douglas with great honour and distinction, and people came from all parts to see the great soldier, whose fame was well known through every part of the Christian world. King Alphonso easily persuaded the Scottish earl, that he would do good service to the Christian cause, by assisting him to drive back the Saracens of Grenada, before proceeding on his voyage to Jerusalem. Lord Douglas and his followers went accordingly to a great battle against Osmyn, and had little difficulty in defeating the Saracens who were opposed to them. But being ignorant of the mode of fighting among the cavalry of the East, the Scots pursued the chase too far, and the Moors, when they saw them scattered and separated from each other, turned suddenly back, with a loud cry of *Allah illah Allah*, which is their shout of battle, and surrounded

¹ M. B. SMEDLEY.

such of the Scottish knights and squires as had advanced too hastily, and were dispersed from each other.

In this new skirmish, Douglas saw Sir William St. Clair of Roslyn fighting desperately, surrounded by many Moors, who were hewing at him with their sabres. "Yonder worthy knight will be slain," Douglas said, "unless he have instant help." With that he galloped to his rescue, but presently was himself also surrounded by many Moors. When he found the enemy press so thick round him, as to leave him no chance of escaping, the Earl took from his neck the Bruce's heart, and speaking to it, as he would have done to the King had he been alive,— "Pass first in fight," he said, "as thou were wont to do, and Douglas will follow thee, or die." He then threw the King's heart among the enemy, and rushing forward to the place where it fell, was there slain. His body was found lying above the silver case, as if it had been his last object to defend the Bruce's heart.

Since the time of the Good Lord James, the Douglasses have carried upon their shields a bloody heart, with a crown upon it, in memory of this expedition.

This Good Lord James of Douglas was one of the best and wisest soldiers that ever drew a sword. He was said to have fought in seventy battles, being beaten in thirteen, and victorious in fifty-seven. Scottish historians describe Lord James as one who was never dejected by bad fortune, or unduly elated by that which was good. They say he was modest and gentle in time of peace, but had a very different countenance upon the day of battle. He was tall, strong, and well made, of a swarthy complexion, with dark hair, from which he was called the Black Douglas. He lisped a little in his speech, but in a manner which became him very much. Not-

withstanding the many battles in which he had fought, his face had escaped without a wound. A brave Spanish knight at the court of King Alphonso, whose face was scarred by the marks of Moorish sabres, expressed wonder that Douglas's countenance should be unmarked with wounds. Douglas replied modestly, he thanked God, who had always enabled his hands to guard and protect his face.

Many of Douglas's followers were slain in the battle in which he himself fell. The rest resolved not to proceed on their journey to Palestine, but to return to Scotland. They brought back the heart of the Bruce, and the bones of the Good Lord James. These last were interred in the church of St. Bride, where Thomas Dickson and Douglas held so terrible a Palm Sunday. The Bruce's heart was buried below the high altar in Melrose Abbey. As for his body, it was laid in the sepulchre in the midst of the church of Dunfermline, under a marble stone. But the church becoming afterwards ruinous, and the roof falling down with age, the monument was broken to pieces, and nobody could tell where it stood. When they were repairing the church of Dunfermline, and removing the rubbish, lo ! they found fragments of the marble tomb of Robert Bruce. Then they began to dig farther, thinking to discover the body of this celebrated monarch ; and at length they came to the skeleton of a tall man, and they knew it must be that of King Robert, both as he was known to have been buried in a winding-sheet of cloth of gold, of which many fragments were found about this skeleton, and also because the breast-bone appeared to have been sawed through, in order to take out the heart. So orders were sent from the King's Court of Exchequer to guard the bones carefully, until

a new tomb should be prepared, into which they were laid with profound respect. A great many gentlemen and ladies attended, and almost all the common people in the neighbourhood ; and as the church could not hold half the numbers, the people were allowed to pass through it, one after another, that each one, the poorest as well as the richest, might see all that remained of the great King Robert Bruce, who restored the Scottish monarchy. Many people shed tears ; for there was the wasted skull, which once was the head that thought so wisely and boldly for his country's deliverance ; and there was the dry bone, which had once been the sturdy arm that killed Sir Henry de Bohun, between the two armies, at a single blow, on the evening before the battle of Bannock-burn.

CHAPTER XV

BATTLE AND TOURNEY

Our business is to fight like men
And hero-like to die!

W. MOTHERWELL.

ROBERT BRUCE, the greatest king who ever wore the Scottish crown, being dead, the kingdom descended to his son David, who was only four years old at his father's death.

King Robert was no sooner in his grave than the enemies of his family began to plot the means of destroying the government which he had established. The principal person concerned in these machinations was Edward Baliol, the son of that John Baliol, who was formerly created King of Scotland by Edward I., and afterwards dethroned by him, and committed to prison, when Edward desired to seize upon the country for himself. Edward Baliol, seeing, as he thought, a favourable opportunity, resolved to renew the claim of his father to the Scottish throne.

In 1333, Edward III. of England formally declared war against Scotland, proposing to support the cause of Baliol, to take possession of Berwick, which that pretended King had yielded up to him, and to chastise the Scots for what he called their rebellion. He placed himself at the head of a great army, and marched towards the frontier.

In the meantime, the war had begun in a manner most unfavourable for Scotland. Archibald Douglas, the brother of the Good Lord James, was appointed Regent, and advanced with a large army to relieve the town of Berwick, then closely besieged by Edward III. with all his host. The garrison made a determined defence, and the Regent endeavoured to relieve them by giving battle to the English, in which he showed more courage than military conduct.

The Scottish army were drawn up on the side of an eminence called Halidon Hill, within two miles of Berwick. King Edward moved with his whole host to attack them. The battle, like that of Falkirk and many others, was decided by that formidable force, the archers of England. They were posted in a marshy ground, from which they discharged their arrows in the most tremendous and irresistible volleys against the Scots, who, drawn up on the slope of the hill, were fully exposed to this destructive discharge, without having the means of answering it.

These English archers were the best ever known in war. They were accustomed to the use of the bow from the time they were children of seven years old, when they were made to practice with a little bow suited to their size and strength, which was every year exchanged for one larger and stronger, till they were able to draw that of a full-grown man. Besides being thus familiarised with the weapon, the archers of England were taught to draw the bowstring to their right ear, while other European nations only drew it to their breast. If you try the difference of the posture, you will find that a much longer arrow can be drawn to the ear than to the breast, because the right hand has more room.

While the Scots suffered under these practised and skilful archers, whose arrows fell like hail amongst them, throwing their ranks into disorder, and piercing the finest armour as if it had been pasteboard, they made desperate attempts to descend the hill, and come to close combat. But these efforts were unavailing, and the defeat of the Scots was complete. A number of their best and bravest nobility were slain, and amongst them Archibald Douglas, the Regent ; very many were made prisoners. Berwick surrendered in consequence of the defeat, and Scotland seemed again to be completely conquered by the English.

Throughout the whole country only four castles and a small tower acknowledged the sovereignty of David Bruce, after the battle of Halidon ; and it is wonderful to see how, by their efforts, the patriots soon afterwards changed for the better that unfavourable and seemingly desperate state of things. In the several skirmishes and battles which were fought all over the kingdom, the Scots, knowing the country, and having the good-will of the inhabitants, were generally successful, as also in surprising castles and forts, cutting off convoys of provisions which were going to the English, and destroying scattered parties of the enemy ; so that, by a long and incessant course of fighting, the patriots gradually regained what they lost in great battles. I will tell you one or two of the incidents which befell during this bloody war.

Lochleven Castle, situated on an island upon a large lake, was one of the four which held out in name of David Bruce, and would not submit to Edward Baliol. The governor was a loyal Scotsman, called Alan Vipont, assisted by Jaques, or James, Lamby. The castle was

besieged by Sir John Stirling, a follower of John Baliol, with an army of English. As the besiegers dared not approach the island with boats, Stirling fell on a singular device to oblige the garrison to surrender. There is a small river, called the Leven, which runs out of the eastern extremity of the lake, or loch. Across this stream the besiegers reared a very strong and lofty mound, or barrier, so as to prevent the waters of the Leven from leaving the lake. They expected that the waters of the lake would rise in consequence of being thus confined, and that they would overflow the island, and oblige Vipont to surrender. But Vipont sending out at dead of night a small boat with four men, they made a breach in the mound ; and the whole body of water, breaking forth with incredible fury, swept away the tents, baggage, and troops of the besiegers, and nearly destroyed their army. The remains of the English mound are shown to this day, though some doubt has been expressed as to the truth of the incident. It is certain the English were obliged to raise the siege with loss.

Among the warlike exploits of this period, we must not forget the defence of the castle of Dunbar by the celebrated Countess of March. Her lord had embraced the side of David Bruce, and had taken the field with the Regent. The countess, who from her complexion was termed Black Agnes, by which name she is still familiarly remembered, was a high-spirited and courageous woman, the daughter of Thomas Randolph, Earl of Murray, and the heiress of his valour and patriotism. The castle of Dunbar itself was very strong, being built upon a chain of rocks stretching into the sea, and having only one passage to the mainland, which was well fortified. It was besieged by Montague, Earl of Salisbury, who em-

ployed to destroy its walls great military engines, constructed to throw huge stones, with which machines fortifications were attacked before the use of cannon.

Black Agnes set all his attempts at defiance, and showed herself with her maids on the walls of the castle, wiping the places where the huge stones fell with a clean towel, as if they could do no ill to her castle, save raising a little dust, which a napkin could wipe away.

The Earl of Salisbury then commanded his engineers to bring forward to the assault an engine of another kind, being a sort of wooden shed, or house, rolled forward on wheels, with a roof of peculiar strength, which from resembling the ridge of a hog's back, occasioned the machine to be called a sow. This, according to the old mode of warfare, was thrust close up to the walls of a besieged castle or city, and served to protect from the arrows and stones of the besieged a party of soldiers placed within the sow, who, being thus defended, were in the meanwhile employed in undermining the wall, or breaking an entrance through it with pickaxes and mining tools. When the Countess of March saw this engine advanced to the walls of the castle, she called out to the Earl of Salisbury in derision and making a kind of rhyme,—

“ Beware, Montagow,
For farrow shall thy sow.”

At the same time she made a signal, and a huge fragment of rock, which hung prepared for the purpose, was dropped down from the wall upon the sow, whose roof was thus dashed to pieces. As the English soldiers, who had been within it, were running as fast as they could to get out of the way of the arrows and stones which were discharged on them from the wall, Black Agnes called out, “ Behold the litter of English pigs ! ”

The Earl of Salisbury could jest also on such serious occasions. One day he rode near the walls with a knight dressed in armour of proof, having three folds of mail over an acton, or leathern jacket ; notwithstanding which, one William Spens shot an arrow from the battlements of the castle with such force, that it penetrated all these defences, and reached the heart of the wearer. "That is one of my lady's love-tokens," said the earl, as he saw the knight fall dead from his horse. "Black Agnes's love-shafts pierce to the heart."

Upon another occasion, the Countess of March had well nigh made the Earl of Salisbury her prisoner. She caused one of her people enter into treaty with the besiegers, pretending to betray the castle. Trusting to this agreement, the earl came at midnight before the gate, which he found open, and the portcullis drawn up. As Salisbury was about to enter, one John Copland, a squire of Northumberland, pressed on before him, and as soon as he passed the threshold, the portcullis was dropped, and thus the Scots missed their principal prey, and made prisoner only a person of inferior condition.

At length the castle of Dunbar was relieved by Alexander Ramsay of Dalwolsy, who brought the countess supplies by sea both of men and provisions. The Earl of Salisbury, learning this, despaired of success, and raised the siege, which had lasted nineteen weeks. The minstrels made songs in praise of the perseverance and courage of Black Agnes. The following lines are nearly the sense of what is preserved :—

" She kept a stir in tower and trench,
That brawling boisterous Scottish wench :
Came I early, came I late,
I found Agnes at the gate."

In the middle of these troubles, the English and Scottish knights and nobles, when there was any truce between the countries, supplied the place of the wars in which they were commonly engaged, with tournaments and games of chivalry. These were meetings not for the express purpose of fighting, but for that of trying which was the best man-at-arms. But instead of wrestling, leaping, or running races on foot or horse, the fashion then was that the gentlemen tilted together, that is, rode against each other in armour with their long lances, and tried which could bear the other out of the saddle, and throw him to the ground. Sometimes they fought on foot with swords and axes ; and although all was meant in courtesy and fair play, yet lives were often lost in this idle manner as much as if the contest had been carried on with the purpose of armed battle and deadly hatred. In later days they fought with swords purposely blunted on the edge, and with lances which had no steel point ; but in the times we speak of at present, they used in tilts and tournaments the same weapons which they employed in war.

A very noted entertainment of this kind was given to both Scottish and English champions by Henry of Lancaster, then called Earl of Derby, and afterwards King Henry IV. of England. He invited the Knight of Liddesdale, the good Sir Alexander Ramsay, and about twenty other distinguished Scottish knights, to a tilting match, which was to take place near Berwick. After receiving and entertaining his Scottish guests nobly, the Earl of Derby began to enquire of Ramsay in what manner of armour the knights should tilt together.

“With shields of plate,” said Ramsay, “such as men use in tournaments.”

This may be supposed a peculiarly weighty and strong kind of armour, intended merely for this species of encounter.

“Nay,” said the Earl of Derby, “we shall gain little praise if we tilt in such safety; let us rather use the lighter armour which we wear in battle.”

“Content are we,” answered Sir Alexander Ramsay, “to fight in our silk doublets, if such be your lordship’s pleasure.”

The Knight of Liddesdale was wounded on the wrist by the splinter of a spear, and was obliged to desist from the exercise. A Scottish knight called Sir Patrick Grahame tilted with a warlike English baron named Talbot, whose life was saved by his wearing two breast-plates. The Scottish lance pierced through both, and sunk an inch into the breast. Had he been only armed as according to agreement, Talbot had been a dead man. Another English knight challenged the Grahame at supper-time, to run three courses with him the next day.

“Dost thou ask to tilt with me?” said the Grahame; “rise early in the morning, confess your sins, and make your peace with God, for you shall sup in paradise.” Accordingly, on the ensuing morning, Grahame ran him through the body with his lance, and he died on the spot. Another English knight was also slain, and one of the Scots mortally wounded. William Ramsay was borne through the helmet with a lance, the splinter of the broken spear remaining in his skull, and nailing his helmet to his head. As he was expected to die on the spot, a priest was sent for, who heard him confess his sins, without the helmet being removed.

“Ah, it is a goodly sight,” quoth the good Earl of Derby, much edified by this spectacle, “to see a knight

make his shrift ” (that is, confession of his sins) “ in his helmet. God send me such an ending ! ”

But when the shrift was over, Sir Alexander Ramsay, to whom the wounded knight was brother, or kinsman, made him lie down at full length, and, with surgery as rough as their pastime, held his friend’s head down with his foot, while, by main strength, he pulled the fragment of the spear out of the helmet, and out of the wound. Then William Ramsay started up, and said, “ that he should do well enough.”

“ Lo ! what stout hearts men may bear ! ” said the Earl of Derby, as much admiring the surgical treatment as he had done the religious. Whether the patient lived or died, does not appear.

In fixing the prizes, it was settled that the English knights should decide which of the Scots had done best, and the Scots should, in like manner, judge the valour of the English. Much equity was shown in the decision on both sides, and the Earl of Derby was munificent in distribution of gifts and prizes. This may serve to show you the amusements of this stirring period, of which war and danger were the sport as well as the serious occupation.

CHAPTER XVI

DOUGLAS AT OTTERBURN

But I have dream'd a dreary dream,
Beyond the Isle of Sky ;
I saw a dead man win a fight
And I think that man was I.

Ballad of the Battle of Otterburn.

IT was from prudence, not from want of courage, that the Scots avoided great battles with the English. They readily engaged in smaller actions, when they fought with the utmost valour on both sides, till, as an old historian expresses it, sword and lance could endure no longer, and then they would part from each other, saying, “Good day ; and thanks for the sport you have shown.” A very remarkable instance of such a desperate battle occurred in the year 1388.

The Scottish nobles had determined upon an invasion of England on a large scale, and had assembled a great army for that purpose ; but learning that the people of Northumberland were raising an army on the eastern frontier, they resolved to limit their incursion to that which might be achieved by the Earl of Douglas, with a chosen band of four or five thousand men. With this force he penetrated into the mountainous frontier of England, where an assault was least expected, and issuing forth near Newcastle, fell upon the flat and rich

country around, slaying, plundering, burning, and loading his army with spoil.

Percy, Earl of Northumberland, an English noble of great power, and with whom the Douglas had frequently had encounters, sent his two sons, Sir Henry and Sir Ralph Percy, to stop the progress of this invasion. Both were gallant knights ; but the first, who, from his impetuosity, was called Hotspur, was one of the most distinguished warriors in England, as Douglas was in Scotland. The brothers threw themselves hastily into Newcastle, to defend that important town ; and as Douglas, in an insulting manner, drew up his followers before the walls, they came out to skirmish with the Scots. Douglas and Henry Percy encountered personally ; and it so chanced, that Douglas in the struggle got possession of Hotspur's spear, to the end of which was attached a small ornament of silk, embroidered with pearls, on which was represented a lion, the cognizance, as it is called, of the Percies. Douglas shook this trophy aloft, and declared that he would carry it into Scotland, and plant it on his castle of Dalkeith.

“That,” said Percy, “shalt thou never do. I will regain my lance ere thou canst get back into Scotland.”

“Then,” said Douglas, “come to seek it, and thou shalt find it before my tent.”

The Scottish army, having completed the purpose of their expedition, began their retreat up the vale of the little river Reed, which afforded a tolerable road running north-westward towards their own frontier. They encamped at Otterburn, about twenty miles from the Scottish border, on the 19th August, 1388.

In the middle of the night, the alarm arose in the Scottish camp, that the English host were coming upon

them, and the moonlight showed the approach of Sir Henry Percy, with a body of men superior in number to that of Douglas. He had already crossed the Reed water, and was advancing towards the left flank of the Scottish army. Douglas, not choosing to receive the assault in that position, drew his men out of the camp, and with a degree of military skill which could scarce have been expected when his forces were of such an undisciplined character, he altogether changed the position of the army, and presented his troops with their front to the advancing English.

Hotspur, in the meantime, marched his squadrons through the deserted camp, where there were none left but a few servants and stragglers of the army. The interruptions which the English troops met with, threw them a little into disorder, when the moon arising showed them the Scottish army, which they had supposed to be retreating, drawn up in complete order, and prepared to fight. The battle commenced with the greatest fury ; for Percy and Douglas were the two most distinguished soldiers of their time, and each army trusted in the courage and talents of their commanders, whose names were shouted on either side. The Scots, who were out-numbered, were at length about to give way, when Douglas, their leader, caused his banner to advance, attended by his best men. He himself shouting his war-cry of " Douglas ! " rushed forward, clearing his way with the blows of his battle-axe, and breaking into the very thickest of the enemy. He fell, at length, under three mortal wounds. Had his death been observed by the enemy, the event would probably have decided the battle against the Scots ; but the English only knew that some brave man-at-arms had fallen. Meantime the other

Scottish nobles pressed forward, and found their general dying among several of his faithful esquires and pages, who lay slain around. A stout priest, called William of North Berwick, the chaplain of Douglas, was protecting the body of his wounded patron with a long lance.

“ How fares it, cousin ? ” said Sinclair, the first Scottish knight who came up to the expiring leader.

“ Indifferently,” answered Douglas ; “ but blessed be God, my ancestors have died in fields of battle, not on down-beds. I sink fast ; but let them still cry my war-cry, and conceal my death from my followers. There was a tradition in our family that a dead Douglas should win a field, and I trust it will be this day accomplished.”

The nobles did as he had enjoined ; they concealed the Earl’s body, and again rushed on to the battle, shouting “ Douglas ! Douglas ! ” louder than before. The English were weakened by the loss of the brave brothers, Henry and Ralph Percy, both of whom were made prisoners, fighting most gallantly, and almost no man of note amongst the English escaped death or captivity. Hence a Scottish poet has said of the name of Douglas,

“ Hosts have been known at that dread sound to yield,
And, Douglas dead, his name hath won the field.”

Sir Henry Percy became the prisoner of Sir Hugh Montgomery, who obliged him for ransom to build a castle for him at Penoon in Ayrshire. The battle of Otterburn was disastrous to the leaders on both sides—Percy being made captive, and Douglas slain on the field. It has been the subject of many songs and poems, and the great historian Froissart says, that one other action only excepted, it was the best fought battle of that war-like time.

CHAPTER XVII

CLANS CHATTAN AND KAY

A wild world, my masters, this Scotland of ours must have been. No fear of want of interest ; no lassitude in those days for want of work—

“ For treason, d’ye see,
Was to them a dish of tea
And murder, bread and butter.”

From Sir W. Scott’s Diary.

THE disturbances of the Highlands were one of the plagues of the reign of Robert III. That extensive range of mountains was inhabited by a race of men different in language and manners from the Lowlanders, and divided into families called Clans. The English termed them Wild Scots, and the French the Scottish Savages ; and, in good truth, very wild and savage they seem to have been.

These Highlanders were much addicted to quarrelling with each other. Two clans, or rather two leagues or confederacies, composed each of several separate clans, fell into such deadly feud with each other, as filled the whole neighbourhood with slaughter and discord.

When this feud or quarrel could be no otherwise ended, it was resolved that the difference should be decided by a combat of thirty men of the Clan Chattan, against the same number of the Clan Kay ; that the battle should take place on the North Inch of Perth, a beautiful and level meadow, in part surrounded by the river Tay ; and

that it should be fought in presence of the King and his nobles. Now, there was a cruel policy in this arrangement ; for it was to be supposed that all the best and leading men of each clan would desire to be among the thirty which were to fight for their honour, and it was no less to be expected that the battle would be very bloody and desperate. Thus, the probable event would be, that both clans, having lost very many of their best and bravest men, would be more easily managed in future. Such was probably the view of the King and his counsellors in permitting this desperate conflict, which however, was much in the spirit of the times.

The parties on each side were drawn out, armed with sword and target, axe and dagger, and stood looking on each other with fierce and savage aspects, when, just as the signal for fight was expected, the commander of the Clan Chattan perceived that one of his men, whose heart had failed him, had deserted his standard. There was no time to seek another man from the clan, so the chieftain, as his only resource, was obliged to offer a reward to any one who would fight in the room of the fugitive. Perhaps you think it might be difficult to get a man, who, for a small hire, would undergo the perils of a battle which was likely to be so obstinate and deadly. But in that fighting age, men valued their lives lightly. One Henry Wynd, a citizen of Perth, and a saddler by trade, a little bandy-legged man, but of great strength and activity, and well accustomed to use the broad-sword, offered himself, for half a French crown, to serve on the part of the Clan Chattan in the battle of that day.

The signal was then given by sound of the royal trumpets, and of the great war-bagpipes of the Highlanders, and the two parties fell on each other with the utmost

fury ; their natural ferocity of temper being excited by feudal hatred against the hostile clan, zeal for the honour of their own, and a consciousness that they were fighting in presence of the King and nobles of Scotland. As they fought with the two-handed sword and axe, the wounds they inflicted on each other were of a ghastly size and character. Heads were cloven asunder, limbs were lopped from the trunk. The meadow was soon drenched with blood, and covered with dead and wounded men.

In the midst of the deadly conflict, the chieftain of the Clan Chattan observed that Henry Wynd, after he had slain one of the clan Kay, drew aside, and did not seem willing to fight more.

“ How is this,” said he, “ art thou afraid ? ”

“ Not I,” answered Henry ; “ but I have done enough of work for half-a-crown.”

“ Forward and fight,” said the Highland chief ; “ he that doth not grudge his day’s work, I will not stint him in his wages.”

Thus encouraged, Henry Wynd again plunged into the conflict, and, by his excellence as a swordsman, contributed a great deal to the victory, which at length fell to the Clan Chattan. Ten of the victors, with Henry Wynd, whom the Highlanders called the *Gow Chrom* (that is, the crooked or bandy-legged smith, for he was both a smith and a saddler, war-saddles being then made of steel), were left alive, but they were all wounded. Only one of the clan Kay survived, and he was unhurt. But this single individual dared not oppose himself to eleven men, though all more or less injured, but, throwing himself into the Tay, swam to the other side, and went off to carry to the Highlands the news of his clan’s defeat.

It is said, he was so ill received by his kinsmen that he put himself to death.

Some part of the above story is matter of tradition, but the general fact is certain. Henry Wynd was rewarded to the Highland chieftain's best abilities ; but it was remarked, that, when the battle was over, he was not able to tell the name of the clan he had fought for, replying, when asked on which side he had been, that he was fighting for his own hand. Hence the proverb, " Every man for his own hand, as Henry Wynd fought."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE POET KING

O sleep ye sound, Sir James, she said,
When ye suld rise and ride !
There's twenty men wi' bow and blade,
Are seeking where ye hide.

From The Heart of Midlothian.

King ROBERT III., had a son, called James, whom he was probably afraid to intrust to the keeping of Albany, the King's own brother, as his death would have rendered that ambitious prince next heir to the throne. He resolved, therefore, to send the young prince when eleven years old to France, under pretence that he would receive a better education there than Scotland could afford him. An English vessel captured that on board of which the prince was sailing to France, and James was sent to London. When Henry heard that the Prince of Scotland was in his power, he resolved to detain him a prisoner. This was very unjust, for the countries of England and Scotland were at peace together at the time. The King sent him to prison, however, saying, that "the prince would be as well educated at his court as at that of France, for that he understood French well." This was said in mockery, but Henry kept his word in this point ; and though the Scottish prince was confined unjustly, he received an excellent education at the expense of the English monarch.

This misfortune, which placed the only remaining son of the poor old King in the hands of the English, seems to have broken the heart of Robert III., who died about a year afterwards, overwhelmed with calamities and infirmity.

By 1424, the English Government were not unwilling to deliver up James, the rather that he had fallen in love with Joanna, the Earl of Somerset's daughter, nearly related to the royal family of England. They considered that this alliance would incline the young prince to peace with England ; and that the education which he had received, and the friendships which he had formed in that country, would incline him to be a good and peaceable neighbour. The Scots agreed to pay a considerable ransom ; and upon these terms James, the first of that name, was set at liberty, and returned to become king in Scotland, after eighteen years' captivity.

This King James, the first monarch of the name, was also the first of his unfortunate family who showed a high degree of ability. He had received an excellent education, of which his talents had enabled him to make the best use. He was also prudent and just, consulted the interests of his people, and endeavoured, as far as he could, to repress those evils, which had grown up during his years of imprisonment in England.

James I. restored a considerable degree of tranquillity to the country, which he found in such a distracted state. He made wise laws for regulating the commerce of the nation, both at home and with other states, and strict regulations for the administration of justice betwixt those who had complaints against one another.

But his greatest labour, and that which he found most difficult to accomplish, was to diminish the power of the

great nobles, who ruled like so many kings, each on his own territory and estate, and made war on the King, or upon one another, whenever it was their pleasure to do so. These disorders he endeavoured to check, and had several of these great persons brought to trial, and, upon their being found guilty, deprived them of their estates. The nobles complained that this was done out of spite against them, and that they were treated with hardship and injustice ; and thus discontents were entertained against this good Prince. Another cause of offence was, that to maintain justice, and support the authority of the throne, it was found necessary that some taxes for this purpose should be raised from the subjects ; and the Scottish people being poor, and totally unaccustomed to pay any such contributions, they imputed this odious measure to the King's avarice. And thus, though King James was so well-intentioned a King, and certainly the ablest who had reigned in Scotland since the days of Robert Bruce, yet both the high and the low murmured against him, which encouraged some wicked men amongst the nobility to conspire his death.

The chief person in the plot was one Sir Robert Graham, uncle to the Earl of Stratherne. He was bold and ambitious, and highly offended with the King on account of an imprisonment which he had sustained by the royal command. He drew into the plot the Earl of Athole, an old man of little talent, by promising to make his son, Sir Robert Stewart, King of Scotland, in place of James. Others were engaged in the conspiracy from different motives. To prepare his scheme, Graham retreated into the remote Highlands, and from thence sent a defiance, renouncing his allegiance to the King, and threatening to put his sovereign to death with his own

hand. A price was set upon his head, payable to any-one who should deliver him up to justice ; but he lay concealed in the wild mountains to prosecute his revenge against James.

The Christmas preceding his murder was appointed by the King for holding a feast at Perth. On his way to that town he was met by a Highland woman, calling herself a prophetess. She stood by the side of the ferry by which he was about to travel to the north, and cried with a loud voice,—“ My Lord the King, if you pass this water, you will never return again alive.” The King was struck with this for a moment, because he had read in a book that a king should be slain that year in Scotland ; for it often happens, that when a remarkable deed is in agitation, rumours of it get abroad, and are repeated under pretence of prophecies ; but which are, in truth, only conjectures of that which seems likely to happen. There was a knight in the court, on whom the King had conferred the name of the King of Love, to whom the King said in jest,—“ There is a prophecy that a king shall be killed in Scotland this year ; now, Sir Alexander, that must concern either you or me, since we two are the only kings in Scotland.” Other circumstances occurred, which might have prevented the good King’s murder, but none of them were attended to. The King, while at Perth, took up his residence in an abbey of Black Friars, there being no castle or palace in the town convenient for his residence ; and this made the execution of the conspiracy more easy, as his guards, and the officers of his household, were quartered among the citizens.

The day had been spent by the King in sport and feasting, and by the conspirators in preparing for their

enterprise. They had destroyed the locks of the doors of the apartment, so that the keys could not be turned ; and they had taken away the bars with which the gates were secured, and had provided planks by way of bridges, on which to cross the ditch which surrounded the monastery. At length, on the 20th February, 1437, all was prepared for carrying their treasonable purpose into execution, and Graham came from his hiding-place in the neighbouring mountains, with a party of nigh three hundred men, and entered the gardens of the convent.

The King was in his night-gown and slippers. He had passed the evening gaily with the nobles and ladies of his court, in reading romances, and in singing and music, or playing at chess and tables. The Earl of Athole, and his son Sir Robert Stewart, who expected to succeed James on the throne, were among the last courtiers who retired. At this time James remained standing before the fire, and conversing gaily with the queen and her ladies before he went to rest. The Highland woman before mentioned again demanded permission to speak with the King, but was refused, on account of the untimeliness of the hour. All now were ordered to withdraw.

At this moment there was a noise and clashing heard, as of men in armour, and the torches in the garden cast up great flashes of light against the windows. The King then recollected his deadly enemy, Sir Robert Graham, and guessed that he was coming to murder him. He called to the ladies who were left in the chamber to keep the door as well as they could, in order to give him time to escape. He first tried to get out at the windows, but they were fast barred, and defied his strength. By help of the tongs, which were in the chimney, he raised,

however, a plank of the flooring of the apartment, and let himself down into a narrow vault beneath, used as a common sewer. This vault had formerly had an opening into the court of the convent, by which he might have made his escape. But all things turned against the unfortunate James ; for, only three days before, he had caused the opening to be built up, because when he played at ball in the court-yard, the ball used to roll into the vault through that hole.

While the King was in this place of concealment, the conspirators were seeking him from chamber to chamber throughout the convent, and, at length, came to the room where the ladies were. The Queen and her women endeavoured, as well as they might, to keep the door shut, and one of them, Catherine Douglas, boldly thrust her own arm across the door, instead of the bar, which had been taken away, as I told you. But the brave lady's arm was soon broken, and the traitors rushed into the room with swords and daggers drawn, hurting and throwing down such of the women as opposed them. The poor Queen stood half undressed, shrieking aloud ; and one of the brutal assassins attacked, wounded, and would have slain her, had it not been for a son of Sir Robert Graham, who said to him, “ What would you do to the Queen ? She is but a woman—Let us seek the King.”

They accordingly commenced a minute search, but without any success ; so they left the apartment, and sought elsewhere about the monastery. In the meanwhile the King turned impatient, and desired the ladies to bring sheets and draw him up out of the inconvenient lurking-place. At this unlucky moment the conspirators returned. One of them now recollects that there was

such a vault, and that they had not searched it. And when they tore up the plank they saw King James. Then, first one, and then another of the villains, brethren of the name of Hall, descended into the vault, with daggers drawn, to despatch the unfortunate King, who was standing there in his shirt, without weapons of any kind. But James, who was an active and strong man, threw them both down beneath his feet, and struggled to wrest the dagger from one or other of them, in which attempt his hands were severely cut and mangled. The murderers also were so vigorously handled, that the marks of the King's gripe were visible on their throats for weeks afterwards. Then Sir Robert Graham himself sprung down on the King, who, finding no further defence possible, asked him for mercy, and for leisure to confess his sins to a priest. But Graham replied fiercely, "Thou never hadst mercy on those of thine own blood, nor on any one else, therefore thou shalt find no mercy here ; and as for a confessor thou shalt have none but this sword." So speaking, he thrust the sword through the King's body. And yet it is said, that when he saw his prince lying bleeding under his feet, he was desirous to have left the enterprise unfinished ; but the other conspirators called on Graham to kill the King, otherwise he should himself die by their hands ; upon which Graham, with the two men who had descended into the vault before him, fell on the unhappy Prince with their daggers, and slew him by many stabs. There were sixteen wounds in his breast alone.

By this time, but too late, news of this outrage had reached the town, and the household servants of the King, with the people inhabiting the town of Perth, were hastening to the rescue, with torches and weapons. The

traitors accordingly caught the alarm, and retreated into the Highlands, losing in their flight only one or two, taken or slain by the pursuers. When they spoke about their enterprise among themselves, they greatly regretted that they had not killed the Queen along with her husband, fearing that she would be active and inexorable in her vengeance.

Indeed their apprehensions were justified by the event, for Queen Joanna made so strict search after the villainous assassins, that in the course of a month most of them were thrown into prison, and being tried and condemned, they were put to death.

The people of Scotland generally, were much incensed against the murderers ; for, although they had murmured against King James while he lived, yet the dismal manner of his death, and the general feeling that his intentions towards his people were kind and just, caused him to be much regretted. He had also many popular qualities. His face was handsome, and his person strong and active. His mind was well cultivated with ornamental and elegant accomplishments, as well as stored with useful information. He understood music and poetry, and wrote verses, both serious and comic. Two of his compositions are still preserved, and read with interest and entertainment by those who understand the ancient language in which they are written. One of these is called "The King's Quhair," that is, the King's Book. It is a love poem, composed when he was a prisoner in England, and addressed to the Princess Joanna of Somerset, whom he afterwards married. The other is a comic poem, called "Christ's Kirk on the Green," in which the author gives an account of a merry-making of the country people, held for the purpose of sport, where they danced, revelled,

drank, and finally quarrelled and fought. There is much humour shown in this piece, though one would think the subject a strange one for a king to write upon. He particularly ridicules the Scots for want of acquaintance with archery. One man breaks his bow, another shoots his arrow wide of the mark, a third hits the man's body at whom he took aim, but with so little effect that he cannot pierce his leatheren doublet. There is a meaning in this raillery. James I., seeing the advantage which the English possessed by their archery, was desirous to introduce that exercise more generally into Scotland, and ordered regular meetings to be held for this purpose. Perhaps he might hope to enforce these orders, by employing a little wholesome raillery on the awkwardness of the Scottish bowmen.

On the whole, James I. was much and deservedly lamented. The murderer Graham was so far from being remembered with honour, as he had expected, for the assassination which he had committed, that his memory was execrated in a popular rhyme, then generally current :

“ Robert Graham,
That slew our king,
God give him shame ! ”

CHAPTER XIX

JAMES II AND THE BLACK DOUGLASSES

I.—AT EDINBURGH CASTLE

Edinburgh castle, toun and tour,
God grant you sink for sin ;
And that even for the black dinnour
Earl Douglas got therein.

. Old Rhyme.

WHEN James I. was murdered, his son and heir, James II., was only six years old ; so that Scotland was plunged into all the discord and confusions of a regency.

The affairs of the kingdom, during the minority of James II., were chiefly managed by two statesmen, who seem to have been men of considerable personal talent, but very little principle or integrity. Sir Alexander Livingston was guardian of the King's person ; Sir William Crichton was Chancellor of the kingdom. They debated betwixt themselves the degree of authority attached to their respective offices, and at once engaged in quarrels with each other, and with one who was more powerful than either of them—the great Earl of Douglas.

That mighty house was now at the highest pitch of its greatness. The Earl possessed Galloway, Annandale, and other extensive properties in the south of Scotland, where almost all the inferior nobility and gentry acknowledged him as their patron and lord. Thus the Douglasses

had at their disposal that part of Scotland, which from its constant wars with England was most disciplined and accustomed to arms. They possessed the duchy of Touraine and lordship of Longueville in France, and they were connected by intermarriage with the Scottish royal family.

The Douglasses were not only powerful from the extent of lands and territories, but also from the possession of great military talents, which seemed to pass from father to son, and occasioned a proverb, still remembered in Scotland.—

“ So many, so good, as of the Douglasses have been,
Of one sirname in Scotland never yet were seen.”

Unfortunately, their power, courage, and military skill, were attended with arrogance and ambition, and the Douglasses seemed to have claimed to themselves the rank and authority of sovereign princes, independent of the laws of the country, and of the allegiance due to the monarch. It was a common thing for them to ride with a retinue of a thousand horse ; and as Archibald, the Earl of Douglas of the time, rendered but an imperfect allegiance even to the severe rule of James I., it might be imagined that his power could not be easily restrained by such men as Crichton and Livingston—great indeed, through the high offices which they held, but otherwise of a degree far inferior to that of Douglas.

But when this powerful nobleman died, in 1439, and was succeeded by his son William, a youth of only sixteen years old, the wily Crichton began to spy an occasion to crush the Douglasses, as he hoped, for ever, by the destruction of the youthful earl and his brother, and for abating, by this cruel and unmerited punishment, the power and pride of this great family. Crichton

proposed to Livingston to join him in this meditated treachery ; and, though enemies to each other, the guardian of the King and the Chancellor of the kingdom united in the vile project of cutting off two boys, whose age alone showed their innocence of the guilt charged upon them. For this purpose flattery and fair words were used to induce the young Earl, and his brother David, with some of their nearest friends, to come to court, where it was pretended that they would be suitable companions and intimates for the young king. An old adherent of the family greatly dissuaded the Earl from accepting this invitation, and exhorted him, if he went to Edinburgh in person, to leave at least his brother David behind him. But the unhappy youth, thinking that no treachery was intended, could not be diverted from the fatal journey.

The Chancellor Crichton received the Earl of Douglas and his brother on their journey, at his own castle of Crichton, and with the utmost appearance of hospitality and kindness. After remaining a day or two at this place, the two brothers were inveigled to Edinburgh Castle, and introduced to the young King, who, not knowing the further purpose of his guardians, received them with affability, and seemed delighted with the prospect of enjoying their society.

On a sudden the scene began to change. At an entertainment which was served up to the Earl and his brother, the head of a black bull was placed on the table. The Douglasses knew this, according to a custom which prevailed in Scotland, to be the sign of death, and leaped from the table in great dismay. But they were seized by armed men who entered the apartment. They underwent a mock trial, in which all the insolences of their

ancestors were charged against them, and were condemned to immediate execution. The young King wept, and implored Livingston and Crichton to show mercy to the young noblemen, but in vain. These cruel men only reproved him for weeping at the death of those whom they called his enemies. The brothers were led out to the court of the castle, and beheaded without delay.

This barbarous proceeding was as unwise as it was unjust. It did not reduce the power of the Douglasses, but only raised general detestation against those who managed the affairs of James II. A fat, quiet, peaceable person, called James the Gross, indolent from habit of body and temper of mind, next became Earl of Douglas, which was probably the reason that no public commotion immediately attended on the murder of the hapless brothers. But this corpulent dignitary lived only two years, and was in his turn succeeded by his son William, who was as active and turbulent as any of his ambitious predecessors, and engaged in various civil broils for the purpose of revenging the death of his kinsmen.

II.—AT THRIEVE

Whence should ye o'er gentle spirits
Such o'ermastering power achieve ?
Workers of high-handed outrage !
Making King and people grieve,
O the lawless lords of Galloway !
O the bloody towers of Thrieve !

SHAIRP.

James II., in the early part of his reign, conferred on William, Earl of Douglas, the important post of lieutenant-general of Scotland. But that ambitious nobleman was soon disposed to extend his authority to independent

power, and the King found it necessary to take from him the dangerous office with which he had intrusted him. Douglas retired to his own castle meditating revenge ; whilst the King, on the other hand, looked around him for some fitting opportunity of diminishing the power of so formidable a rival.

Douglas was not long of showing his total contempt of the King's authority, and his power of acting for himself.—One of his friends and followers, named Auchinleck, had been slain by the Lord Colville. The criminal certainly deserved punishment, but it ought to have been inflicted by the regular magistrates of the crown, not by the arbitrary pleasure of a private baron, however great and powerful. Douglas, however, took up the matter as a wrong done to himself, and revenged it by his own authority. He marched a large body of his forces against the Lord Colville, stormed his castle, and put every person within it to death. The king was unable to avenge this insult to his authority.

But a still more flagrant breach of law, and violation of all respect to the King's authority, happened in the case of Maclellan, the tutor, or guardian of the young Lord of Bomby, ancestor of the Earls of Kirkcudbright. This was one of the few men of consequence in Galloway, who, defying the threats of the Earl of Douglas, had refused to join with him against the King. The Earl, incensed at his opposition, suddenly assaulted his castle, made him prisoner, and carried him to the strong fortress of Thrieve, in Galloway, situated on an island in the river Dee. The King took a particular interest in Maclellan's fate, the rather that he was petitioned to interfere in his favour by a personal favourite of his own. This was Sir Patrick Gray, the commander of the royal guard, a

gentleman much in James's confidence, and constantly attending on his person, and who was Maclellan's near relative, being his uncle on the mother's side. In order to prevent Maclellan from sharing the fate of Colville and Herries, the King wrote a letter to the Earl of Douglas, entreating as a favour, rather than urging as a command, that he would deliver the person of the Tutor of Bomby, as Maclellan was usually entitled, into the hands of his relative, Sir Patrick Gray.

Sir Patrick himself went with the letter to the castle of Thrieve. Douglas received him just as he had arisen from dinner, and, with much apparent civility, declined to speak with Gray, on the occasion of his coming, until Sir Patrick also had dined, saying, "It was ill talking between a full man and a fasting." But this courtesy was only a pretence to gain time to do a very cruel and lawless action. Guessing that Sir Patrick Gray's visit respected the life of Maclellan, he resolved to hasten his execution before opening the King's letter. Thus, while he was feasting Sir Patrick, with every appearance of hospitality, he caused his unhappy kinsman to be led out, and beheaded in the court-yard of the castle.

When dinner was over, Gray presented the King's letter, which Douglas received and read over with every testimony of profound respect. He then thanked Sir Patrick for the trouble he had taken in bringing him so gracious a letter from his Sovereign, especially considering he was not at present on good terms with his Majesty. "And," he added, "the King's demand shall instantly be granted, the rather for your sake." The Earl then took Sir Patrick by the hand, and led him to the castleyard, where the body of Maclellan was still lying.

“Sir Patrick,” said he, as his servants removed the bloody cloth which covered the body, “you have come a little too late. There lies your sister’s son—but he wants the head. The body is, however, at your service.”

“My lord,” said Gray, suppressing his indignation, “if you have taken his head, you may dispose of the body as you will.”

But, when he had mounted his horse, which he instantly called for, his resentment broke out, in spite of the dangerous situation in which he was placed:—

“My lord,” said he, “if I live, you shall bitterly pay for this day’s work.”

So saying, he turned his horse and galloped off.

“To horse, and chase him!” said Douglas; and if Gray had not been well mounted, he would, in all probability, have shared the fate of his nephew. He was closely pursued till near Edinburgh, a space of fifty or sixty miles.

III.—AT STIRLING

The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven’s grace,
And the rest in God’s own time.

SCOTT.

Besides these daring and open instances of contempt of the King’s authority, Douglas entered into such alliances as plainly showed his determination to destroy entirely the royal government. He formed a league with the Earl of Crawford, called Earl Beardie, and sometimes, from the ferocity of his temper, the Tiger-Earl, who had great power in the counties of Angus, Perth, and Kincardine, and with the Earl of Ross, who possessed extensive and almost royal authority in the north of Scotland, by which these three powerful earls

agreed that they should take each other's part in every quarrel, and against every man, the King himself not excepted.

James then plainly saw that some strong measures must be taken, yet it was not easy to determine what was to be done. The league between the three earls enabled them, if open war was attempted, to assemble a force superior to that of the crown. The King, therefore, dissembled his resentment, and, under pretext of desiring an amicable conference and reconciliation, requested Douglas to come to the royal court at Stirling. The haughty Earl hesitated not to accept of this invitation, but before he actually did so, he demanded and obtained a protection, or safe conduct, under the great seal, pledging the King's promise that he should be permitted to come to the court and to return in safety.

Thus protected, as he thought, against personal danger, Douglas came to Stirling in the end of February, 1452, where he found the King lodged in the castle of that place, which is situated upon a rock rising abruptly from the plain, at the upper end of the town, and only accessible by one gate, which is strongly defended. The numerous followers of Douglas were quartered in the town, but the Earl himself was admitted into the castle. One of his nearest confidants, and most powerful allies, was James Hamilton of Cadyow, the head of the great house of Hamilton. This gentleman pressed forward to follow Douglas, as he entered the gate. But Livingston, who was in the castle, with the King, thrust back Hamilton, who was his near relation, and struck him upon the face ; and when Hamilton, greatly incensed, rushed on him, sword in hand, he repulsed him with a long lance, till the gates were shut against him. Sir James Hamilton was



Stirling Castle

From a Photograph by Valentine & Sons, Ltd

very angry at this usage at the time, but afterwards knew that Livingston acted a friendly part in excluding him from the danger into which Douglas was throwing himself.

The King received Douglas kindly, and, after some amicable expostulation with him upon his late conduct, all seemed friendship and cordiality betwixt James and his too-powerful subject. By invitation of James, Douglas dined with him on the day following. Supper was presented at seven o'clock, and after it was over, the King having led Douglas into another apartment, where only some of the privy council and of his body-guard were in attendance, he introduced the subject of the Earl's bond with Ross and Crawford, and exhorted him to give up the engagement, as inconsistent with his allegiance and the quiet of the kingdom. Douglas declined to relinquish the treaty which he had formed. The King urged him more imperiously, and the Earl returned a haughty and positive refusal, upbraiding the King, at the same time, with mal-administration of the public affairs. Then the King burst into a rage at his obstinacy, and exclaimed, "By Heaven, my lord, if *you* will not break the league, *this* shall." So saying, he stabbed the Earl with his dagger first in the throat, and instantly after in the lower part of the body. Sir Patrick Gray, who had sworn revenge on Douglas for the execution of Maclellan, then struck the Earl on the head with a battle-axe; and others of the King's retinue showed their zeal by stabbing at the dying man with their knives and daggers. He expired without uttering a word, covered with twenty-six wounds. The corpse did not receive any Christian burial. At least, about forty years since, a skeleton was found buried in the garden, just below the fatal window, which was, with much probability, con-

jected to be the remains of the Earl of Douglas, who died thus strangely and unhappily by the hand of his Sovereign.

This was a wicked and cruel action on the King's part ; bad if it were done in hasty passion, and yet worse if James meditated the possibility of this violence from the beginning, and had determined to use force if Douglas should not yield to persuasion. The Earl had deserved punishment, perhaps even that of death, for many crimes against the state ; but the King ought not to have slain him without form of trial, and in his own chamber, after decoying him thither under assurance that his person should be safe.

The scene, however, opened very differently from the manner in which it was to end. There were in the town of Stirling four brethren of the murdered Douglas, who had come to wait on him to court. Upon hearing that their elder brother had died in the manner I have told you, they immediately acknowledged James, the eldest of the four, as his successor in the earldom. They then hastened each to the country where he had interest (for they were all great lords), and, collecting their friends and vassals, they returned to Stirling, dragging the safe-conduct, or passport, which had been granted to the Earl of Douglas, at the tail of a miserable cart-jade, in order to show their contempt for the King. They next, with the sound of five hundred horns and trumpets, proclaimed King James a false and perjured man. Afterwards they pillaged the town of Stirling, and, not thinking that enough, they sent back Hamilton of Cadyow to burn it to the ground. But the strength of the castle defied all their efforts, and after this bravado, the Douglasses dispersed themselves.

IV.—AT ROXBURGH CASTLE

The Prince laid low in manhood's prime.

The strong Border castle of Roxburgh was in the hands of the English, but, in 1460, the King determined to recover this bulwark of the kingdom. Breaking through a truce which existed with England at the time, James summoned together the full force of his kingdom to accomplish this great enterprise. The nobles attended in numbers, and well accompanied, at the summons of a prince who was always respected, and generally successful in his military undertakings.

Roxburgh Castle was situated on an eminence near the junction of the Tweed and the Teviot ; the waters of the Teviot, raised by a damhead or weir, flowed round the fortress, and its walls were as strong as the engineers of the time could raise. On former occasions it had been taken by stratagem, but James was now to proceed by a regular siege.

With this purpose he established a battery of such large clumsy cannon as were constructed at that time, upon the north side of the river Tweed. The siege had lasted some time, and the army began to be weary of the undertaking, when they received new spirit from the arrival of the Earl of Huntly with a gallant body of fresh troops. The King, out of joy at these succours, commanded his artillery to fire a volley upon the castle, and stood near the cannon himself, to mark the effect of the shot. The great guns of that period were awkwardly framed out of bars of iron, fastened together by hoops of the same metal, somewhat in the same manner in which barrels are now made. They were, therefore, far more liable to acci-

dents than modern cannon, which are cast in one entire solid piece, and then bored hollow by a machine. One of these ill-made guns burst in going off. A fragment of iron broke James's thigh-bone, and killed him on the spot. Another splinter wounded the Earl of Angus. No other person sustained injury, though many stood around. Thus died James the Second of Scotland, in the twenty-ninth year of his age, on the 3rd August 1460.

This King did not possess the elegant accomplishments of his father ; and the manner in which he slew the Earl of Douglas must be admitted as a stain upon his reputation. Yet he was, upon the whole, a good prince, and was greatly lamented by his subjects.

Upon the lamentable death of James II., the army which lay before Roxburgh was greatly discouraged, and seemed about to raise the siege. But Mary, the widow of their slain Monarch, appeared in their council of war, leading her eldest son, a child of eight years old, who was the successor to the crown, and spoke to them these gallant words : “ Fy, my noble lords ! think not now shamefully to give up an enterprise which is so bravely begun, or to abandon the revenge of this unhappy accident which has befallen before this ill-omened castle. Forward, my brave lords, and persevere in your undertaking ; and never turn your backs till this siege is victoriously ended. Let it not be said that such brave champions needed to hear from a woman, and a widowed one, the courageous advice and comfort which she ought rather to receive from you ! ” The Scottish nobles received this heroic address with shouts of applause, and persevered in the siege of Roxburgh Castle, until the garrison, receiving no relief, were obliged to surrender the place through famine.

CHAPTER XX

A KING'S FEARS

O, that a mighty man, of such descent,
Of such possessions, and so high esteem,
Should be infused with so foul a spirit !

SHAKESPEARE.

KING JAMES III. was timorous, a great failing in a warlike age ; and his cowardice made him suspicious of his nobility, and particularly of his two brothers. He was fond of money, and therefore did not use that generosity towards his powerful subjects which was necessary to secure their attachment ; but, on the contrary, endeavoured to increase his private hoards of wealth by encroaching upon the rights both of clergy and laity, and thus made himself at once hated and contemptible. He was a lover of the fine arts, as they are called, of music and architecture ; a disposition graceful in a monarch, if exhibited with due regard to his dignity. But he made architects and musicians his principal companions, excluding his nobility from the personal familiarity to which he admitted those whom the haughty barons of Scotland termed masons and fiddlers. Cochran, an architect, Rogers, a musician, Leonard, a smith, Hommel, a tailor, and Torphichen, a fencing-master, were his counsellors and companions. These habits of low society excited the hatred of the nobility, who began to make comparisons betwixt the

King and his two brothers, the Dukes of Albany and Mar, greatly to the disadvantage of James.

These younger sons of James the Second were of appearance and manners such as were then thought most suited to their royal birth. Both princes excelled in the military exercises of tilting, hunting, hawking, and other personal accomplishments, for which their brother, the King, was unfit by taste or from timidity, although they were in those times reckoned indispensable to a man of rank.

Perhaps some excuse for the King's fears may be found in the turbulent disposition of the Scottish nobles, who often nourished schemes of ambition, which they endeavoured to gratify by exercising a control over the King's person. The following incident may serve to show you the manners of the Scottish Kings, and the fears which James entertained for the enterprises of the nobility.

About the year 1474, Lord Somerville being in attendance upon the King's court, James III. offered to come and visit him at his castle of Cowthally, near the town of Carnwath, where he then lived in all the rude hospitality of the time, for which this nobleman was peculiarly remarkable. It was his custom, when, being from home, he intended to return to the castle with a party of guests, merely to write the words, *Speates and raxes*; that is, spits and ranges; meaning by this hint that there should be a great quantity of food prepared, and that the spits and ranges, or frame-work on which they turn, should be put into employment. Even the visit of the King himself did not induce Lord Somerville to send any other than his usual intimation; only he repeated it three times, and despatched it to his castle by a special messenger. The paper was delivered to the Lady Somerville, who, having been lately married, was not quite



"They made out the Writing"

accustomed to read her husband's handwriting, which probably was not very good ; for in those times noblemen used the sword more than the pen. So the lady sent for the steward, and, after laying their heads together, instead of reading *Speates and raxes, speates and raxes, speates and raxes* ; they made out the writing to be *Spears and jacks, spears and jacks, spears and jacks*. Jacks were a sort of leathern doublet, covered with plates of iron, worn as armour by horsemen of inferior rank. They concluded the meaning of these terrible words to be, that Lord Somerville was in some distress, or engaged in some quarrel in Edinburgh, and wanted assistance ; so that, instead of killing cattle and preparing for a feast, they collected armed men together, and got ready for a fray. A party of two hundred horsemen were speedily assembled, and were trotting over the moors towards Edinburgh, when they observed a large company of gentlemen employed in the sport of hawking, on the side of Corsett-hill. This was the King and Lord Somerville, who were on their road to Cowthally, taking their sport as they went along. The appearance of a numerous body of armed men soon turned their game to earnest ; and the King, who saw the Lord Somerville's banner at the head of the troop, concluded it was some rebellious enterprise against his person, and charged the baron with treason. Lord Somerville declared his innocence. "Yonder," said he, "are indeed my men and my banner, but I have no knowledge whatever of the cause that has brought them here. But if your grace will permit me to ride forward, I will soon see the cause of this disturbance. In the meantime, let my eldest son and heir remain as an hostage in your grace's power, and let him lose his head if I prove false to my duty." The King

accordingly permitted Lord Somerville to ride towards his followers, when the matter was soon explained by those who commanded them. The mistake was then only subject of merriment ; for the King, looking at the letter, protested he himself would have read it *Spears and jacks*, rather than *Speates and raxes*. When they came to Cowthally, the lady was much out of countenance at the mistake. But the King greatly praised her for the despatch which she had used in raising men to assist her husband, and said he hoped she would always have as brave a band at his service, when the King and kingdom required them. And thus everything went happily off.

It was natural that a prince of a timid, and at the same time a severe disposition, such as James III. seems to have had, should see with anxiety the hold which his brothers possessed over the hearts of his subjects ; and the insinuations of the unworthy familiars of his private hours turned that anxiety and suspicion into deadly and implacable hatred. Various causes combined to induce the mean and obscure favourites of James to sow enmity betwixt him and his brothers.

They informed him that the Earl of Mar had consulted witches when and how the King should die, and that it had been answered that he should fall by means of his nearest relations. They brought to James also an astrologer, that is, a man who pretended to calculate future events by the motion of the stars, who told him, that in Scotland a Lion should be killed by his own whelps. All these things wrought on the jealous and timid disposition of the King, so that he seized upon both his brethren. Albany was imprisoned in the castle of Edinburgh, but Mar's fate was instantly decided ; the

King caused him to be murdered by stifling him in a bath, or, as other historians say, by causing him to be bled to death. James committed this horrid crime, in order to avoid dangers which were in a great measure imaginary ; but we shall find that the death of his brother Mar rather endangered than added to his safety.

Albany was in danger of the same fate, but some of his friends in France or Scotland had formed a plan of rescuing him. A small sloop came into the road-stead of Leith, loaded with wine of Gascony, and two small barrels were sent up as a present to the imprisoned prince. The guard having suffered the casks to be carried to Albany's chamber, the duke, examining them in private, found that one of them contained a roll of wax, enclosing a letter, exhorting him to make his escape, and promising that the little vessel which brought the wine should be ready to receive him if he could gain the waterside. The letter conjured him to be speedy, as there was a purpose to behead him on the day following. A coil of ropes was also enclosed in the same cask, in order to enable him to effect his descent from the castle wall, and the precipice upon which it is built. There was a faithful attendant, his chamberlain, imprisoned with him in the same apartment, who promised to assist his master in this perilous undertaking. The first point was to secure the captain of the guard ; for which purpose Albany invited that officer to sup with him, in order, as the duke pretended, to taste the good wine which had been presented to him in the two casks. The captain accordingly, having placed his watches where he thought there was danger, came to the Duke's chamber, attended by three of his soldiers, and partook of a collation. After supper, the Duke engaged him in playing at tables and dice,

until the captain, seated beside a hot fire, and plied with wine by the chamberlain, began to grow drowsy, as did his attendants, on whom the liquor had not been spared. Then the Duke of Albany, a strong man and desperate, leapt from table, and stabbed the captain with a whinger or dagger, so that he died on the spot. The like he did to two of the captain's men, and the chamberlain despatched the other, and threw their bodies on the fire. This was the more easily accomplished that the soldiers were intoxicated and stupefied. They then took the keys from the captain's pocket, and, getting out upon the walls, chose a retired corner, out of the watchman's sight, to make their perilous descent. The chamberlain tried to go down the rope first, but it was too short, so that he fell and broke his thigh-bone. He then called to his master to make the rope longer. Albany returned to his apartment, and took the sheets from the bed, with which he lengthened the rope, so that he descended the precipice in safety. He then got his chamberlain on his back, and conveyed him to a place of security, and went himself to the seaside, when, upon the appointed signal, a boat came ashore and took him off to the vessel, in which he sailed for France.

During the night, the guards, who knew that their officer was in the Duke's apartment with three men, could not but suppose that all was safe; but when daylight showed them the rope hanging from the walls, they became alarmed, and hastened to the Duke's lodgings. Here they found the body of one man stretched near the door, and the corpses of the captain and other two lying upon the fire. The King was much surprised at so strange an escape, and would give no credit to it, till he had examined the place with his own eyes.

CHAPTER XXI

COCHRAN AND BELL-THE-CAT

Choose out the man to put this peril on
And gird him with this glory.

THE death of Mar, and the flight of Albany, increased the insolence of King James's unworthy favourites. Robert Cochran, the mason, rose into great power, and as every man's petition to the King came through his hands, and he expected and received bribes to give his countenance, he amassed so much wealth, that he was able in his turn to bribe the King to confer on him the earldom of Mar, with the lands and revenues of the deceased Prince. All men were filled with indignation to see the inheritance of the murdered Earl, the son of the King of Scotland, conferred upon a mean upstart, like this Cochran. This unworthy favourite was guilty of another piece of mal-administration, by mixing the silver coin of the kingdom with brass and lead, and thereby decreasing its real value, while orders were given by proclamation to take it at the same rate as if it were composed of pure silver. The people refused to sell their corn and other commodities for this debased coin, which introduced great distress, confusion, and scarcity. Some one told Cochran, that this money should be called in, and good coin issued in its stead ; but he was so confident of the currency of the Cochran-placks, as the people

called them, that he said,—“ The day I am hanged they may be called in ; not sooner.” This speech, which he made in jest, proved true in reality.

At length, in 1482, a great number of the nobility and barons held a secret council in the church of Lauder, where they enlarged upon the evils which Scotland sustained through the insolence and corruption of Cochran and his associates. While they were thus declaiming, Lord Gray requested their attention to a fable. “ The mice,” he said, “ being much annoyed by the persecution of the cat, resolved that a bell should be hung about puss’s neck, to give notice when she was coming. But though the measure was agreed to in full council, it could not be carried into effect, because no mouse had courage enough to undertake to tie the bell to the neck of the formidable enemy.” This was as much as to intimate his opinion, that though the discontented nobles might make bold resolutions against the King’s ministers, yet it would be difficult to find any one courageous enough to act upon them.

Archibald, Earl of Angus, a man of gigantic strength and intrepid courage, and head of that second family of Douglas whom I before mentioned, started up when Gray had done speaking. “ I am he,” he said, “ who will bell the cat ;” from which expression he was distinguished by the name of Bell-the-Cat to his dying day.

While thus engaged, a loud authoritative knocking was heard at the door of the church. This announced the arrival of Cochran, attended by a guard of three hundred men, attached to his own person, and all gaily dressed in his livery of white, with black facings, and armed with partisans. His own personal appearance corresponded with this magnificent attendance. He was

attired in a riding suit of black velvet, and had round his neck a fine chain of gold, whilst a bugle-horn, tipped and mounted with gold, hung down by his side. His helmet was borne before him, richly inlaid with the same precious metal ; even his tent and tent-cords were of silk, instead of ordinary materials. In this gallant guise, having learned there was some council holding among the nobility, he came to see what they were doing, and it was with this purpose that he knocked furiously at the door of the church. Sir Robert Douglas of Lochleven, who had the charge of watching the door, demanded who was there. When Cochran answered, "The Earl of Mar," the nobles greatly rejoiced at hearing he was come, to deliver himself, as it were, into their hands.

As Cochran entered the church, Angus, to make good his promise to bell the cat, met him, and rudely pulled the gold chain from his neck, saying, "A halter would better become him." Sir Robert Douglas, at the same time, snatched away his bugle-horn, saying, "Thou hast been a hunter of mischief too long."

"Is this jest or earnest, my lords ?" said Cochran, more astonished than alarmed at this rude reception.

"It is sad earnest," said they, "and that thou and thy accomplices shall feel ; for you have abused the King's favour towards you, and now you shall have your reward according to your deserts."

It does not appear that Cochran or his guards offered any resistance. A part of the nobility went next to the King's pavilion, and, while some engaged him in conversation, others seized upon Leonard, Hommel, Torphichen, and the rest, with Preston, one of the only two gentlemen amongst King James's minions, and hastily condemned them to instant death, as having misled the

King, and misgoverned the kingdom. The only person who escaped was John Ramsay of Balmain, a youth of honourable birth, who clasped the King round the waist when he saw the others seized upon. Him the nobles spared, in respect of his youth, for he was not above sixteen years, and of the King's earnest intercession in his behalf. There was a loud acclamation among the troops, who contended with each other in offering their tent-ropes, and the halters of their horses, to be the means of executing these obnoxious ministers. Cochran, who was a man of audacity, and had first attracted the King's attention by his behaviour in a duel, did not lose his courage, though he displayed it in an absurd manner. He had the vanity to request that his hands might not be tied with a hempen rope, but with a silk cord, which he offered to furnish from the ropes of his pavilion ; but this was only teaching his enemies how to give his feelings additional pain. They told him he was but a false thief and should die with all manner of shame ; and they were at pains to procure a hair-tether, or halter, as still more ignominious than a rope of hemp. With this they hanged Cochran over the centre of the bridge of Lauder, in the middle of his companions, who were suspended on each side of him. When the execution was finished, the lords returned to Edinburgh, where they resolved that the King should remain in the castle, under a gentle and respectful degree of restraint.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FATAL SHRIFT

To be a king is a pleasant thing,
To bee a prince unto a peere :
But you have heard and soe have I too,
A man may well buy gold too deare.

Old Ballad.

GRADUALLY James III. sunk back into those practices which had formerly cost him so dear. To prevent a renewal of the force put on his person, he made a rule that none should appear armed in the royal presence, except the King's Guard, who were placed under the command of that same John Ramsay of Balmain, the only one of his former favourites who had been spared by Bell-the-Cat, and the other nobles, at the insurrection of Lauder bridge. This gave high offence in a country, where to be without arms was accounted both unsafe and dishonourable.

The King's love of money also grew, as is often the case, more excessive as he advanced in years. He would hardly grant anything, whether as matter of favour or of right, without receiving some gift or gratuity. By this means he accumulated a quantity of treasure, which, considering the poverty of his kingdom, is absolutely marvellous. His "black chest," as his strong-box was popularly called, was brimful of gold and silver coins, besides quantities of plate and jewels. But while he

hoarded these treasures, he was augmenting the discontent of both the nobility and people ; and amid the universal sense of the King's weakness, and hatred of his avarice, a general rebellion was at length excited against him.

The King, among other magnificent establishments, had built a great hall, and a royal chapel, within the castle of Stirling, both of them specimens of finely ornamented Gothic architecture. He had also established a double choir of musicians and singing men in the chapel, designing that one complete band should attend him wherever he went, to perform Divine service before his person, while the other, as complete in every respect, should remain in daily attendance in the royal chapel.

As this establishment necessarily incurred considerable expense, James proposed to annex to the royal chapel the revenues of the priory of Coldingham, in Berwickshire. This rich priory had its lands amongst the possessions of the Homes and the Hepburns, who had established it as a kind of right that the prior should be of one or other of these two families, in order to insure their being favourably treated in such bargains as either of them might have to make with the Church. When, therefore, these powerful clans understood that, instead of a Home or a Hepburn being named prior, the King intended to bestow the revenues of Coldingham to maintain his royal chapel at Stirling, they became extremely indignant, and began to hold a secret correspondence, and form alliances, with all the discontented men in Scotland, and especially with Angus, and such other lords as, having been engaged in the affair of Lauder bridge, naturally entertained apprehensions that the King would, one day or other, find means of avenging

himself for the slaughter of his favourites, and the restraint which had been imposed on his own person.

By the time that the King heard of this league against him, it had reached so great a head that everything seemed to be prepared for war, since the whole lords of the south of Scotland, who could collect their forces with a rapidity unknown elsewhere, were all in the field, and ready to act. James, naturally timid, was induced to fly to the North. He fortified the castle of Stirling, commanded by Shaw of Fintrie, to whom he committed the custody of the prince his son, and heir-apparent, charging the governor neither to let anyone enter the castle, nor permit anyone to leave it, as he loved his honour and his life. Especially he commanded him to let no one have access to his son. His treasures James deposited in Edinburgh Castle ; and having thus placed in safety, as he thought, the two things he loved best in the world, he hastened to the north country, where he was joined by the great lords and gentlemen on that side of the Forth ; so that it seemed as if the south and the north parts of Scotland were about to fight against each other.

Meanwhile, Angus, Home, Bothwell, and others of the insurgent nobility, determined, if possible, to get into their hands the person of the prince, resolving that, notwithstanding his being a child, they would avail themselves of his authority to oppose that of his father. Accordingly, they bribed, with a large sum of money, Shaw, the governor of Stirling Castle, to deliver the prince (afterwards James IV.) into their keeping. When they had thus obtained possession of Prince James's person, they collected their army, and published proclamations in his name, intimating that King James III.

was bringing Englishmen into the country to assist in overturning its liberties,—that he had sold the frontiers of Scotland to the Earl of Northumberland, and to the governor of Berwick, and declaring that they were united to dethrone a king whose intentions were so unkingly, and to place his son in his stead. These allegations were false ; but the King was so unpopular, that they were listened to and believed.

James, in the meantime, arrived before Stirling at the head of a considerable army, and passing to the gate of the castle, demanded entrance. But the governor refused to admit him. The King then eagerly asked for his son ; to which the treacherous governor replied that the lords had taken the Prince from him against his will. Then the poor King saw that he was deceived, and said in wrath, “ False villain, thou hast betrayed me ; but if I live, thou shalt be rewarded according to thy deserts ! ” If the King had not been thus treacherously deprived of the power of retiring into Stirling Castle, he might, by means of that fortress, have avoided a battle until more forces had come up to his assistance ; and, in that case, might have overpowered the rebel lords. Yet having with him an army of nearly thirty thousand men, he moved boldly towards the insurgents. The Lord David Lindsay of the Byres, in particular, encouraged the King to advance. He had joined him with a thousand horse and three thousand footmen from the counties of Fife and Kinross ; and now riding up to the King on a fiery grey horse, he lighted down, and entreated the King’s acceptance of that noble animal, which, whether he had occasion to advance or retreat, would beat every other horse in Scotland provided the King could keep his saddle.

The King upon this took courage, and advanced against the rebels, confident in his great superiority of numbers. The field of battle was not above a mile or two distant from that where Bruce had defeated the English on the glorious day of Bannockburn ; but the fate of his descendant and successor was widely different.

The King, moving forward in order of battle, called for the horse which Lord David Lindsay had given him, that he might ride forward and observe the motions of the enemy. He saw them from an eminence advancing in three divisions, having about six thousand men in each. The Homes and Hepburns had the first division, with the men of the East Borders and of East Lothian. The next was composed of the Western Borderers, or men of Liddesdale and Annandale, with many from Galloway. The third division consisted of the rebel lords and their choicest followers, bringing with them the young Prince James, and displaying the broad banner of Scotland.

When the King beheld his own ensign unfurled against him, and knew that his son was in the hostile ranks, his heart, never very courageous, began altogether to fail him ; for he remembered the prophecy, that he was to fall by his nearest of kin, and also what the astrologer had told him of the Scottish lion which was to be strangled by his own whelps. These idle fears so preyed on James's mind, that his alarm became visible to those around him, who conjured him to retire to a place of safety. But at that moment the battle began.

The Homes and Hepburns attacked the King's vanguard, but were repulsed by the Highlanders with volleys of arrows. On this the Borderers of Liddesdale and Annandale, who bore spears longer than those used in

the other parts of Scotland, charged with the wild and furious cries, which they called their *slogan*, and bore down the royal forces opposed to them.

Surrounded by sights and sounds to which he was so little accustomed, James lost his remaining presence of mind, and turning his back, fled towards Stirling. But he was unable to manage the grey horse given him by Lord Lindsay, which, taking the bit in his teeth, ran full gallop downhill into a little hamlet, where was a mill, called Beaton's mill. A woman had come out to draw water at the mill-dam, but terrified at seeing a man in complete armour coming down towards her at full speed, she left her pitcher, and fled back into the mill. The sight of the pitcher frightened the King's horse, so that he swerved as he was about to leap the brook, and James, losing his seat, fell to the ground, where, being heavily armed and sorely bruised, he remained motionless. The people came out, took him into the mill, and laid him on a bed. Some time afterwards he recovered his senses ; but feeling himself much hurt and very weak, he demanded the assistance of a priest. The miller's wife asked who he was, and he imprudently replied, "I was your King this morning." With equal imprudence the poor woman ran to the door, and called with loud exclamations for a priest to confess the King. "I am a priest," said an unknown person, who had just come up ; "lead me to the King." When the stranger was brought into the presence of the unhappy monarch, he kneeled with apparent humility, and asked him, "Whether he was mortally wounded ?" James replied, that his hurts were not mortal, if they were carefully looked to ; but that, in the meantime, he desired to be confessed, and receive pardon of his sins from a priest, according to the

fashion of the Catholic Church. "This shall presently give thee pardon!" answered the assassin; and, drawing a poniard, he stabbed the King four or five times to the very heart; then took the body on his back and departed, no man opposing him, and no man knowing what he did with the body.

Who this murderer was has never been discovered, nor whether he was really a priest or not. There were three persons, Lord Gray, Stirling of Keir, and one Borthwick, a priest, observed to pursue the King closely, and it was supposed that one or other of them did the bloody deed.

The battle did not last long after the King left the field, the royal party drawing off towards Stirling, and the victors returning to their camp. It is usually called the battle of Sauchieburn, and was fought upon the 18th of June, 1488.

Thus died King James the Third, an unwise and unwarlike prince; although, setting aside the murder of his brother the Earl of Mar, his character is rather that of a weak and avaricious man, than of a cruel and criminal King.

CHAPTER XXIII

STOUT HEARTS

Now is the time to prove your hardiment.

WORDSWORTH.

THE fate of James III. was not known for some time. He had been a patron of naval affairs; and on the great revolt in which he perished, a brave sea officer, Sir Andrew Wood of Largo, was lying with a small squadron in the Firth of Forth, not far distant from the coast where the battle was fought. He had sent ashore his boats, and brought off several wounded men of the King's party, amongst whom it was supposed might be the King himself.

Anxious to ascertain this important point, the lords sent to Sir Andrew Wood to come on shore, and appear before their council. Wood agreed, on condition that two noblemen of distinction, Lords Seton and Fleming, should go on board his ships, and remain there as hostages for his safe return.

The brave seaman presented himself before the Council and the young King, in the town of Leith. As soon as the Prince saw Sir Andrew, who was a goodly person, and richly dressed, he went towards him, and said, "Sir, are you my father?"

"I am not your father," answered Wood, the tears falling from his eyes; "but I was your father's servant

while he lived, and shall be so to lawful authority until the day I die."

The lords then asked what men they were who had come out of his ships, and again returned to them on the day of the battle of Sauchie.

"It was I and my brother," said Sir Andrew, undauntedly, "who were desirous to have bestowed our lives in the King's defence."

They then directly demanded of him, whether the King was on board his ships ? To which Sir Andrew replied, with the same firmness, "He is not on board my vessels. I wish he had been there, as I should have taken care to have kept him safe from the traitors who have murdered him, and whom I trust to see hanged and drawn for their demerits."

These were bitter answers ; but the lords were obliged to endure them, without attempting any revenge, for fear the seamen had retaliated upon Fleming and Seton. But when the gallant commander had returned on board his ship, they sent for the best officers in the town of Leith, and offered them a reward if they would attack Sir Andrew Wood and his two ships, and make him prisoner, to answer for his insolent conduct to the Council. But Captain Barton, one of the best mariners in Leith, replied to the proposal by informing the Council, that though Sir Andrew had but two vessels, yet they were so well furnished with artillery, and he himself was so brave and skilful, that no ten ships in Scotland would be a match for him.

James IV. afterwards received Sir Andrew Wood into high favour ; and he deserved it by his exploits. In 1490, a squadron of five English vessels came into the Forth, and plundered some Scottish merchant-ships.

Sir Andrew sailed against them with his two ships, the *Flower*, and the *Yellow Carvel*, took the five English vessels, and making their crews and commanders prisoners, presented them to the King at Leith. Henry VII. of England was so much incensed at this defeat, that he sent a stout sea-captain, called Stephen Bull, with three strong ships equipped on purpose, to take Sir Andrew Wood. They met him near the mouth of the firth, and fought with the utmost courage on both sides, attending so much to the battle, and so little to anything else, that they let their ships drift with the tide ; so that the action, which began off St Abb's Head, ended in the Firth of Tay. At length Stephen Bull and his three ships were taken. Sir Andrew again presented the prisoners to the King, who sent them back to England, with a message to Henry VII., that he had as manly men in Scotland, as there were in England, and therefore he desired he would send no more captains on such errands.

To return to the lords who had gained the victory at Sauchie. They resolved to try some of the principal persons who had assisted King James III. in the late civil commotion, as if in so doing they had committed treason against James IV., although the last was not, and could not be king, till after his father's death. They determined to begin with Lord David Lindsay of the Byres, a man well acquainted with military matters, but otherwise blunt and ignorant.

It was on the 10th of May, 1489, that Lindsay was summoned before the Parliament, then sitting at Edinburgh, to defend himself against a charge of treason, which stated, " that he had come in arms to Sauchie with the King's father against the King himself, and had given

the King's father a sword and good horse, counselling him to devour the King's grace here present."

Lord Lindsay knew nothing about the form of law affairs, but hearing himself repeatedly called upon to answer to this accusation, he started up, and told the nobles of the Parliament they were all villains and traitors themselves, and that he would prove them to be such with his sword. The late King, he said, had been cruelly murdered by villains, who had brought the Prince with them to be a pretext and colour for their enterprise, and that if he punish not you hastily for that murder, you will murder him when you think time, as you did his father. "And," said the stout old lord, addressing himself personally to the King, who was present in Parliament, "if your grace's father were still living, I would fight for him to the death, and stand in no awe of these false lurdans" (that is, villains). "Or, if your grace had a son who should come in arms against you, I would take your part against his abettors, and fight in your cause against them, three men against six. Trust me, that though they cause your grace to believe ill of me, I will prove in the end more faithful than any of them."

The Lord Chancellor, who felt the force of these words, tried to turn off their effect, by saying to the King, that Lord Lindsay was an old-fashioned man, ignorant of legal forms, and not able to speak reverently in his grace's presence. "But," said he, "he will submit himself to your grace's pleasure, and you must not be severe with him;" and, turning to the Lord David, he said, "It is best for you to submit to the King's will, and his grace will be good to you."

Now Lord David had a brother-germain, named Patrick Lindsay, who was as good a lawyer as Lord

Lindsay was a soldier. The two brothers had been long upon bad terms ; but when this Mr Patrick saw the Chancellor's drift, he trod upon his elder brother's foot, to make him understand that he ought not to follow the advice given him, nor come into the King's will, which would be in fact confessing himself guilty. The Lord David, however, did not understand the hint. On the contrary, as he chanced to have a sore toe, the tread of his brother's foot was painful to him, so that he looked fiercely at him, and said : " Thou art too pert, thou loon, to stamp upon my foot—if it were out of the King's presence, I would strike thee upon the face."

But Mr Patrick, without regarding his brother's causeless anger, fell on his knees before the assembled nobles, and besought that he might have leave to plead for his brother ; " for," said he, " I see no man of law will undertake his cause for fear of displeasing the King's grace ; and though, my lord, my brother and I have not been friends for many years, yet my heart will not suffer me to see the native house from which I am descended perish for want of assistance."

The King having granted Mr Patrick Lindsay liberty of speech in his brother's behalf, he began by objecting to the King's sitting in judgment in a case, in which he was himself a party, and had been an actor. " Wherefore," said Mr Patrick, " we object to his presence to try this cause, in which, being a party, he ought not to be a judge. Therefore we require his Majesty, in God's name, to rise and leave the court, till the question be considered and decided." The Lord Chancellor and the lords, having conversed together, found that this request was reasonable. So the young King was obliged to retire into an inner apartment, which he resented as a species of public affront.

Mr Patrick next endeavoured to procure favour, by entreating the lords who were about to hear the cause, to judge it with impartiality, and as they would wish to be dealt with themselves, were they in misfortune, and some party adverse to them possessed of power.

“ Proceed, and answer to the accusation,” said the Chancellor. “ You shall have justice at our hands.”

Then Mr Patrick brought forward a defence in point of legal form, stating that the summons required that the Lord Lindsay should appear forty days after citation, whereas the forty days were now expired ; so that he could not be legally compelled to answer to the accusation until summoned anew.

This was found good law ; and Lord David Lindsay, and the other persons accused, were dismissed for the time, nor were any proceedings ever resumed against them.

Lord David, who had listened to the defences without understanding their meaning, was so delighted with the unexpected consequences of his brother’s eloquence, that he broke out into the following rapturous acknowledgment of gratitude :—“ Verily, brother, but you have fine piet words ” (that is, magpie words). “ I could not have believed, by Saint Mary, that ye had such words. Ye shall have the Mains of Kirkfother for your day’s wage.”

The King, on his side, threatened Mr Patrick with a reward of a different kind, saying, “ he would set him where he should not see his feet for twelve months.” Accordingly, he was as good as his word, sending the successful advocate to be prisoner in the dungeon of the Castle of Rothesay, in the island of Bute, where he lay for a whole year.

CHAPTER XXIV

A GALLANT KING

In Scotland is a bonnie kinge,
As proper a youth as neede to be,
Well given to every happy thing,
That can be in a king to see.

Old Ballad.

AMES IV. was not long upon the throne ere his own reflections, and the remonstrances of some of the clergy, made him sensible, that his accompanying the rebel lords against his father in the field of Sauchie was a very sinful action. He did not consider his own youth, nor the enticements of the lords, who had obtained possession of his person, as any sufficient excuse for having been, in some degree, accessory to his father's death, by appearing in arms against him. He deeply repented the crime, and, according to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic religion, endeavoured to atone for it by various acts of penance. Amongst other tokens of repentance, he caused to be made an iron belt, or girdle, which he wore constantly under his clothes ; and every year of his life he added another link of an ounce or two to the weight of it, as if he desired that his penance should not be relaxed, but rather should increase during all the days of his life.

It was, perhaps, in consequence of these feelings of remorse, that the King not only forgave that part of the

nobility which had appeared on his father's side, and abstained from all further persecution against Lord Lindsay and others, but did all in his power to conciliate their affections, without losing those of the other party. The wealth of his father enabled him to be liberal to the nobles on both sides, and at the same time to maintain a more splendid appearance in his court and royal state than had been practised by any of his predecessors. He was himself expert in all feats of exercise and arms, and encouraged the use of them, and the practice of tilts and tournaments in his presence, wherein he often took part himself. It was his frequent custom to make proclamation through his kingdom, that all lords and gentlemen who might desire to win honour, should come to Edinburgh or Stirling, and exercise themselves in tilting with the lance, fighting with the battle-axe, the two-handed sword, shooting with the long bow, or any other warlike contention. He who did best in these encounters had his adversary's weapon delivered up to him ; and the best tilter with the spear received from the King a lance with a head of pure gold.

The fame of these warlike sports—for sports they were accounted, though they often ended in sad and bloody earnest—brought knights from other parts of Europe to contend with those of Scotland ; but, says the historian, with laudible partiality, there were none of them went unmatched, and few that were not overthrown.

We may mention as an example, the combat in the lists betwixt a celebrated German knight, who came to Scotland in search of champions with whom to match himself in single fight, and whose challenge was accepted by Sir Patrick Hamilton, a brother of the Earl of Arran,

and near kinsman to the King. They met gallantly with their lances at full gallop, and broke their spears without doing each other further injury. When they were furnished with fresh lances, they took a second course ; but the Scottish knight's horse, being indifferently trained, swerved, and could by no endeavours of the rider be brought to encounter his adversary. Then Sir Patrick sprung from his saddle, and called to the German knight to do the same, saying, "A horse was a weak warrant to trust to when men had most to do." Then the German dismounted, and fought stoutly with Sir Patrick for the best part of an hour. At length Hamilton, by a blow of his sword, brought the foreigner on his knees, whereupon the King threw his hat into the lists, as a sign that the combat should cease. But the honour of the day remained with Sir Patrick Hamilton.

Besides being fond of martial exercises, James encouraged the arts, and prosecuted science, as it was then understood. He studied medicine and surgery, and appears to have been something of a chemist.

An experiment made under his direction, shows at least the interest which James took in science, although he used a whimsical mode of gratifying his curiosity. Being desirous to know which was the primitive or original language, he caused a deaf and dumb woman to be transported to the solitary island of Inchkeith, with two infant children, devising thus to discover what language they would talk when they came to the age of speech. A Scottish historian, who tells the story, adds, with great simplicity, "Some say they spoke good Hebrew ; for my part I know not, but from report." It is more likely they would scream like their dumb nurse, or bleat like the goats and sheep on the island.

The same historian gives a very pleasing picture of James IV.

There was great love, he says, betwixt the subjects and their sovereign, for the King was free from the vice of avarice, which was his father's failing. Neither would he endure flatterers, cowards, or sycophants about his person, but ruled by the counsel of the most eminent nobles, and thus won the hearts of all men. He often went disguised among the common people, and asked them questions about the King and his measures, and thus learned the opinion which was entertained of him by his subjects.

He was also active in the discharge of his royal duties. His authority, as it was greater than that of any king who had reigned since the time of James I., was employed for the administration of justice, and the protection of every rank of his subjects, so that he was reverenced as well as beloved by all classes of his people. Scotland obtained, under his administration, a greater share of prosperity than she had yet enjoyed. She possessed some share of foreign trade, and the success of Sir Andrew Wood, together with the King's exertions in building vessels, made the country be respected, as having a considerable naval power.

In 1503 the King of England agreed to give his daughter Margaret, a beautiful and accomplished princess, to James IV. in marriage. He offered to endow her with an ample fortune, and on that alliance was to be founded a close league of friendship between England and Scotland, the Kings obliging themselves to assist each other against all the rest of the world. Unfortunately for both countries, but particularly so for Scotland, this peace, designed to be perpetual, did not last above ten years.

Yet the good policy of Henry VII. bore fruit after a hundred years had passed away ; and in consequence of the marriage of James IV. and the Princess Margaret, an end was put to all future national wars, by their great grandson, James VI. of Scotland and I. of England, becoming King of the whole island of Great Britain.

This important marriage was celebrated with great pomp. The Earl of Surrey, a gallant English nobleman, had the charge to conduct the Princess Margaret to her new kingdom of Scotland. The King came to meet her at Newbattle Abbey, within six miles of Edinburgh. He was gallantly dressed in a jacket of crimson velvet, bordered with cloth of gold, and had hanging at his back his lure, as it is called, an implement which is used in hawking. He was distinguished by his strength and agility, leaping on his horse without putting his toe in the stirrup, and always riding full gallop, follow who could. When he was about to enter Edinburgh with his new bride, he wished her to ride behind him, and made a gentleman mount to see whether his horse would carry double. But as his spirited charger was not broken for that purpose, the King got up before his bride on her palfrey, which was quieter, and so they rode through the town of Edinburgh in procession, in the same manner as you may now see a good farmer and his wife riding to church. There were shows prepared to receive them, all in the romantic taste of the age. Thus they found in their way a tent pitched, out of which came a knight armed at all points, with a lady bearing his bugle-horn. Suddenly another knight came up, and took away the lady. Then the first knight followed him, and challenged him to fight. They drew swords accordingly, and fought before the King and Queen for their amusement, till the

one struck the sword out of the other's hands, and then the King commanded the battle to cease. In this representation all was sport except the blows, and these were serious enough. Many other military spectacles were exhibited, tilts and tournaments in particular. James, calling himself the Savage Knight, appeared in a wild dress, accompanied by the fierce chiefs from the Borders and Highlands, who fought with each other till several were wounded and slain in these ferocious entertainments. It is said the King was not very sorry to see himself thus rid of these turbulent leaders, whose feuds and depredations contributed so often to the public disturbance.

CHAPTER XXV

THE STRONG SHIP LION

“ Fight on, my men,” Sir Andrew says,
“ A little I’m hurt, but yet not slain ;
I’ll but lie down and bleed awhile,
And then I’ll rise and fight again.
Fight on my men,” Sir Andrew says,
“ And never flinch before the foe ;
And stand fast by St Andrew’s cross,
Until you hear my whistle blow.”
They never heard his whistle blow,—
Which made their hearts wax sore adread :
Then Horseley said, “ Aboard, my lord,
For well I wot Sir Andrew’s dead.”

Ballad of S^r Andrew Barton.

AMES IV. was extremely desirous to increase the strength of his kingdom by sea, and its commerce ; and Scotland presenting a great extent of sea-coast, and numerous harbours, had at this time a considerable trade. The royal navy, besides one vessel called the *Great Michael*, supposed to be the largest in the world, and which, as an old author says, “ cumbered all Scotland to get her fitted out for sea,” consisted, it is said, of sixteen ships of war. The King paid particular attention to naval affairs, and seemed never more happy than when inspecting and exercising his little navy.

It chanced that one John Barton, a Scottish mariner, had been captured by the Portuguese, as far back as the year 1476. As the King of Portugal refused to make

any amends, James granted the family of Barton letters of reprisals, that is, a warrant empowering them to take all Portuguese vessels which should come in their way, until their loss was made up. There were three brothers, all daring men, but especially the eldest whose name was Andrew Barton. He had two strong ships, the larger called the *Lion*, the lesser the *Jenny Pirwen*, with which it would appear he cruised in the British Channel, stopping not only Portuguese vessels, but also English ships bound for Portugal. Complaints being made to King Henry, he fitted out two vessels, which were filled with chosen men, and placed under the command of Lord Thomas Howard and Sir Edward Howard, both sons to the Earl of Surrey. They found Barton and his vessels cruising in the Downs, being guided to the place by the captain of a merchant vessel, whom Barton had plundered on the preceding day.

On approaching the enemy, the noble brothers showed no ensign of war, but put up a willow wand on their masts, as being the emblem of a trading vessel. But when the Scotsman attempted to make them bring to, the English threw out their flags and pennons, and fired a broadside of their ordnance. Barton then knew that he was engaged with the King of England's ships of war. Far from being dismayed at this, he engaged boldly, and, distinguished by his rich dress and bright armour, appeared on deck with a whistle of gold about his neck, suspended by a chain of the same precious metal, and encouraged his men to fight valiantly.

The fight was very obstinate. If we may believe a ballad of the time, Barton's ship was furnished with a peculiar contrivance, suspending large weights, or beams, from his yardarms, to be dropped down upon the enemy

when they should come alongside. To make use of this contrivance, it was necessary that a person should ascend the mainmast, or in naval language, go aloft. As the English apprehended much mischief from the consequences of this manœuvre, Howard had stationed a Yorkshire gentleman, named Hustler, the best archer in the ship, with strict injunctions to shoot every one who should attempt to go aloft to let fall the beams of Barton's vessel. Two men were successively killed in the attempt, and Andrew Barton himself, confiding in the strong armour which he wore, began to ascend the mast. Lord Thomas Howard called out to the archer to shoot true, on peril of his life. "Were I to die for it," said Hustler, "I have but two arrows left." The first which he shot bounded from Barton's armour without hurting him; but as the Scottish mariner raised his arm to climb higher, the archer took aim where the armour afforded him no protection, and wounded him mortally through the arm-pit.

Barton descended from the mast. "Fight on," he said, "my brave hearts; I am a little wounded, but not slain. I will but rest a while, and then rise and fight again; meantime, stand fast by Saint Andrew's Cross," meaning the Scottish flag, or ensign. He encouraged his men with his whistle, while the breath of life remained. At length the whistle was heard no longer, and the Howards, boarding the Scottish vessel, found that her daring captain was dead. They carried the *Lion* into the Thames, and it is remarkable that Barton's ship became the second man-of-war in the English navy.

CHAPTER XXVI

FLODDEN FIELD

Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear
 And broken was her shield !

SCOTT.

KING JAMES IV. was highly incensed at the attack on Barton's ship, and further jealousies arising between Scotland and England, the King, contrary to the advice of his wisest counsellors, determined to cross the Borders with a royal army. The Parliament were unwilling to go into the King's measures. James, however, was personally so much liked, that he obtained the consent of the Parliament to this fatal and unjust war ; and orders were given to assemble all the array of the kingdom of Scotland upon the Borough-moor of Edinburgh, a wide common, in the midst of which the royal standard was displayed from a large stone, or fragment of rock, called the Harestone.

Various measures were even in this extremity resorted to for preventing the war. One or two of them seem to have been founded upon a knowledge, that the King's temper was tinged with a superstitious melancholy, partly arising from constitutional habits, partly from the remorse which he always entertained for his accession

to his father's death. It was to these feelings that the following scene was doubtless addressed :—

As the King was at his devotions in the church of Linlithgow, a figure, dressed in an azure-coloured robe, girt with a girdle, or sash of linen, having sandals on his feet, with long yellow hair, and a grave commanding countenance, suddenly appeared before him. This singular-looking person paid little or no respect to the royal presence, but pressing up to the desk at which the King was seated, leaned down on it with his arms, and addressed him with little reverence. He declared, that " his Mother laid her commands on James to forbear the journey which he purposed, seeing that neither he, nor any who went with him, would thrive in the undertaking." He also cautioned the King against frequenting the society of women, and using their counsel ; " If thou dost," said he, " thou shalt be confounded and brought to shame."

These words spoken, the messenger escaped from among the courtiers so suddenly, that he seemed to disappear. There is no doubt that this person had been dressed up to represent Saint John, called in Scripture the adopted son of the Virgin Mary. The Roman Catholics believed in the possibility of the souls of departed saints and apostles appearing on earth, and many impostures are recorded in history of the same sort with that I have just told you.

Another story, not so well authenticated, says, that a proclamation was heard at the market-cross of Edinburgh, at the dead of night, summoning the King, by his name and titles, and many of his nobles and principal leaders, to appear before the tribunal of Pluto within the space of forty days. This also has the appearance of a stratagem, invented to deter the King from his expedition.



The Day before Flodden

But neither these artifices, nor the advice and entreaty of Margaret, the Queen of Scotland, could deter James from his unhappy expedition. He was so well beloved, that he soon assembled a great army, and placing himself at their head, he entered England near the castle of Twisell, on the 22nd of August, 1513. He speedily obtained possession of many Border fortresses and collected a great spoil. Instead, however, of advancing with his army upon the country of England, which lay defenceless before him, the King is said to have trifled away his time with Lady Heron of Ford, a beautiful woman, who contrived to divert him from the prosecution of his expedition until the approach of an English army.

While James lay thus idle on the frontier, the Earl of Surrey, that same noble and gallant knight who had formerly escorted Queen Margaret to Scotland, now advanced at the head of an army of twenty-six thousand men. The earl was joined by his son Thomas, the lord high admiral, with a large body of soldiers who had been disembarked at Newcastle. As the warlike inhabitants of the northern counties gathered fast to Surrey's standard so, on the other hand, the Scots began to return home in great numbers; because, though according to the feudal laws, each man had brought with him provisions for forty days, these being now nearly expended, a scarcity began to be felt in James's host. Others went home to place their booty in safety.

Surrey, feeling himself the stronger party, became desirous to provoke the Scottish King to fight. He therefore sent James a message, defying him to battle; and the Lord Thomas Howard, at the same time, added a message, that as King James had often complained of the death of Andrew Barton, he, Lord Thomas, by whom

that deed was done, was now ready to maintain it with his sword in the front of the fight. James returned for answer, that to meet the English in battle was so much his wish, that had the message of the Earl found him at Edinburgh, he would have laid aside all other business to have met him on a pitched field.

But the Scottish nobles entertained a very different opinion from their King. They held a council at which Lord Patrick Lindsay was made president, or chancellor. This was the same person, who, in the beginning of the King's reign, had pleaded so well for his brother, to whose titles and estate he afterwards succeeded. He opened the discussion, by telling the council a parable of a rich merchant, who would needs go to play at dice with a common hazarder, or sharper, and stake a rose-noble of gold against a crooked halfpenny. "You, my lords," he said, "will be as unwise as the merchant, if you risk your King, whom I compare to a precious rose-noble, against the English general, who is but an old crooked churl, lying in a chariot. Though the English lose the day, they lose nothing but this old churl and a parcel of mechanics; whereas so many of our common people have gone home, that few are left with us but the prime of our nobility." He therefore gave it as his advice, that the King should withdraw from the army, for safety of his person, and that some brave nobleman should be named by the council to command in the action. The council agreed to recommend this plan to the King.

But James, who desired to gain fame by his own military skill and prowess, suddenly broke in on the council, and told them, with much heat, that they should not put such a disgrace upon him. "I will fight with the English," he said, "though you had all sworn the contrary.

You may shame yourselves by flight, but you shall not shame me ; and as for Lord Patrick Lindsay, who has got the first vote, I vow, that when I return to Scotland, I will cause him to be hanged over his own gate."

While King James was in this stubborn humour, the Earl of Surrey had advanced as far as Wooler, so that only four or five miles divided the armies. The English leader enquired anxiously for some guide, who was acquainted with the country, which is intersected and divided by one or two large brooks, which unite to form the river Till, and is, besides, in part mountainous. A person well mounted, and completely armed, but having the visor of his helmet lowered, to conceal his face, rode up, and, dismounting, knelt down before the Earl, and offered to be his guide, if he might obtain pardon of an offence of which he had been guilty. The Earl assured him of his forgiveness, provided he had not committed treason against the King of England, or personally, wronged any lady—crimes which Surrey declared he would not pardon. "God forbid," said the cavalier, "that I should have been guilty of such shameful sin ; I did but assist in killing a Scotsman who ruled our Borders too strictly, and often did wrong to Englishmen." So saying, he raised the visor of his helmet, which hid his face, and showed the countenance of the Bastard Heron, who, some years previously, had been a partner in the assassination of Sir Robert Ker, a Scottish nobleman of the Borders. His appearance was most welcome to the Earl of Surrey, who readily pardoned him the death of a Scotsman at that moment, especially since he knew him to be as well acquainted with every pass and path on the eastern frontier, as a life of constant incursion and depredation could make him.

The Scottish army had fixed their camp upon a hill called Flodden, which arises to close in, as it were, the extensive flat called Millfield plain. This eminence slopes steeply towards the plain, and there is an extended piece of level ground on the top, where the Scots might have drawn up their army, and awaited at great advantage the attack of the English. Surrey liked the idea of venturing an assault on that position so ill, that he resolved to try whether he could not prevail on the King to abandon it. He sent a herald to invite James to come down from the height, and join battle in the open plain of Millfield below—reminded him of the readiness with which he had accepted his former challenge—and hinted, that it was the opinion of the English chivalry assembled for battle, that any delay of the encounter would sound to the King's dishonour.

We have seen that James was sufficiently rash and imprudent, but his impetuosity did not reach to the pitch Surrey perhaps expected. He refused to receive the messenger into his presence, and returned for answer, that it was not such a message as it became an earl to send to a king.

Surrey, therefore, distressed for provisions, was obliged to resort to another mode of bringing the Scots to action. He moved northward, sweeping round the hill of Flodden, keeping out of the reach of the Scottish artillery, until, crossing the Till near Twisell Castle, he placed himself, with his whole army, betwixt James and his own kingdom. The King suffered him to make this flank movement without interruption, though it must have afforded repeated and advantageous opportunities for attack. But when he saw the English army interposed betwixt him and his dominions, he became alarmed lest he should

be cut off from Scotland, and resolved to give signal at once for the fatal battle.

With this view the Scots set fire to their huts, and the other refuse and litter of their camp. The smoke spread along the side of the hill, and under its cover the army of King James descended the eminence, which is much less steep on the northern than the southern side, while the English advanced to meet them, both concealed from each other by the clouds of smoke.

The Scots descended in four strong columns, all marching parallel to each other, having a reserve of the Lothian men commanded by Earl Bothwell. The English were also divided into four bodies, with a reserve of cavalry led by Dacre.

The battle commenced at the hour of four in the afternoon. The first which encountered was the left wing of the Scots, commanded by the Earl of Huntly and Lord Home, which overpowered and threw into disorder the right wing of the English, under Sir Edmund Howard. Sir Edmund was beaten down, his standard taken, and he himself in danger of instant death, when he was relieved by the Bastard Heron, who came up at the head of a band of determined outlaws like himself, and extricated Howard. Thomas Howard, the Lord High Admiral, who commanded the second division of the English, bore down, and routed the Scottish division commanded by Crawford and Montrose, who were both slain. Thus matters went on the Scottish left.

Upon the extreme right of James's army, a division of Highlanders, consisting of the clans of MacKenzie, MacLean, and others, commanded by the Earls of Lennox and Argyle, were so insufferably annoyed by the volleys

of the English arrows, that they broke their ranks, and rushed tumultuously down hill, and being attacked at once in flank and rear by Sir Edward Stanley, with the men of Cheshire and Lancashire, were routed with great slaughter.

The division of the Scottish army which was commanded by James in person consisted of the choicest of his nobles and gentry, whose armour was so good, that the arrows made but slight impression upon them. They were all on foot—the King himself had parted with his horse. They engaged the Earl of Surrey, who opposed to them the division which he personally commanded. The Scots attacked with the greatest fury, and, for a time, had the better. Surrey's squadrons were disordered, his standard in great danger, and the English seemed in some risk of losing the battle. But Stanley, who had defeated the Highlanders, came up on one flank of the King's division ; the Admiral, who had conquered Crawford and Montrose, assailed them on the other. The Scots showed the most undaunted courage. Uniting themselves with the reserve under Bothwell, they formed into a circle with their spears extended on every side, and fought obstinately. Bows being now useless, the English advanced on all sides with their bills, a huge weapon which made ghastly wounds. But they could not force the Scots either to break or retire, although the carnage among them was dreadful. James himself died amid his warlike peers and loyal gentry. He was twice wounded with arrows, and at length despatched with a bill. Night fell without the battle being absolutely decided, for the Scottish centre kept their ground, and Home and Dacre held each other at bay. But during the night, the remainder of the

Scottish army drew off in silent despair from the bloody field, on which they left their King, and the flower of his nobility.

This great and decisive victory was gained by the Earl of Surrey on 9th September, 1513. The victors had about five thousand men slain, the Scots twice that number at least. But the loss lay not so much in the number of the slain, as in their rank and quality. The English lost very few men of distinction. The Scots left on the field the King, two bishops, two mitred abbots, twelve earls, thirteen lords, and five eldest sons of peers. The number of gentlemen slain was beyond calculation ; —there is scarcely a family of name in Scottish history who did not lose a relative there.

The Scots were much disposed to dispute the fact, that James IV. had fallen on Flodden Field. Some said, he had retired from the kingdom, and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Others pretended, that in the twilight, when the fight was nigh ended, four tall horsemen came into the field, having each a bunch of straw on the point of their spears, as a token for them to know each other by. They said these men mounted the King on a dun hackney, and that he was seen to cross the Tweed with them at night-fall.

But these are idle fables, invented and believed because the vulgar love what is mysterious, and the Scots readily gave credit to what tended to deprive their enemies of so signal a trophy of victory.

The body which the English affirm to have been that of James, was found on the field by Lord Dacre, and carried by him to Berwick, and presented to Surrey. Both of these lords knew James's person too well to be mistaken. The body was also acknowledged by his two favourite

attendants, Sir William Scott and Sir John Forman, who wept at beholding it.

The fate of these relics was singular and degrading. They were not committed to the tomb, for the Pope, being at that time in alliance with England against France, had laid James under a sentence of excommunication, so that no priest dared to pronounce the funeral-service over them. The royal corpse was therefore embalmed, and sent to the Monastery of Sheen, in Surrey. It lay there till the Reformation, when the monastery was given to the Duke of Suffolk ; and after that period, the body, which was lapped up in a sheet of lead, was suffered to toss about the house like a piece of useless lumber. Stow, the historian, saw it flung into a waste room among old pieces of wood, lead, and other rubbish. Some idle workmen, “ for their foolish pleasure,” says the same writer, “ hewed off the head ; and one Lancelot Young, master-glazier to Queen Elizabeth, finding a sweet smell come from thence, owing, doubtless, to the spices used for embalming the body, carried the head home, and kept it for some time ; but in the end, caused the sexton of Saint Michael’s, Wood Street, to bury it in the charnel-house.”

Such was the end of that King once so proud and powerful. The fatal battle of Flodden, in which he was slain, and his army destroyed, is justly considered as one of the most calamitous events in Scottish history.

CHAPTER XXVII

A DASH FOR LIBERTY

A horse ! a horse ! My kingdom for a horse !

SHAKESPEARE.

James V. was a child of less than two years when, on his father's death at Flodden, he became King. The regency of the kingdom was at first entrusted to his mother, Queen Margaret, who in 1514 married Archibald Douglas, the Earl of Angus.

Margaret might have maintained her authority, for she was personally much beloved ; but it was the fate or the folly of that Queen to form rash marriages. Like her brother Henry of England, who tired of his wives, Margaret seems to have been addicted to tiring of her husbands ; but she had not the power of cutting the heads from the spouses whom she desired to be rid of. Having obtained a divorce from Angus, she married a young man of little power and inferior rank, named Henry Stewart. She lost her influence by that ill-advised measure. Angus, therefore, rose to the supreme authority in Scotland, obtained possession of the person of the King, transacted everything in the name of James, but by his own authority, and became in all respects the Regent of Scotland, though without assuming the name.

The talents of the Earl of Angus were equal to the charge he had assumed. He was able to accomplish a treaty

of peace with England, which was of great advantage to the kingdom. But, according to the fashion of the times, Angus was much too desirous to confer all the great offices, lands, and other advantages in the disposal of the crown, upon his own friends and adherents, to the exclusion of all the nobles and gentry, who had either taken part against him in the late struggle for power, or were not decidedly his partisans. The course of justice also was shamefully perverted, by the partiality of Angus for his friends, kinsmen, and adherents.

An old historian says, “that there dared no man strive at law with a Douglas, or yet with the adherent of a Douglas ; for if he did, he was sure to get the worst of his law-suit. And,” he adds, “although Angus travelled through the country under the pretence of punishing thieves, robbers, and murderers, there were no malefactors so great as those which rode in his own company.”

The King, who was now seventeen years old, became disgusted with the sort of restraint in which Angus detained him, and desirous to free himself from his tutelage. His mother had doubtless a natural influence over him, and that likewise was exerted to the Earl’s prejudice. The Earl of Lennox, a wise and intelligent nobleman, near in blood to the King, was also active in fostering his displeasure against the Douglasses, and schemes began to be agitated for taking the person of the King out of the hands of Angus. But Angus was so well established in the government, that his authority could not be destroyed except by military force ; and it was not easy to bring such to bear against one so powerful, and of such a martial character.

He placed around the King’s person a guard of a hundred

men of his own choice, commanded by Douglas of Parkhead ; he made his brother George, whom James detested, Master of the Royal Household ; and Archibald of Kilspindie, his uncle, Lord Treasurer of the Realm. The close restraint in which the King found himself, only increased his eager desire to be rid of all the Douglasses together, and James had recourse to stratagem.

He prevailed on his mother, Queen Margaret, to yield up to him the castle of Stirling, which was her jointure-house, and secretly to put it into the hands of a governor whom he could trust. This was done with much caution. Thus prepared with a place of refuge, James watched with anxiety an opportunity of flying to it ; and he conducted himself with such apparent confidence towards Angus, that the Douglasses were lulled into security, and concluded that the King was reconciled to his state of bondage, and had despaired of making his escape.

James was then residing at Falkland, a royal palace conveniently situated for hunting and hawking, in which he seemed to take great pleasure. The Earl of Angus at this period left the court for Lothian, where he had some urgent business—Archibald Douglas of Kilspindie went to Dundee, to visit a lady to whom he was attached—and George Douglas had gone to St Andrews, to extort some further advantages from Chancellor Beaton, who was now archbishop of that see, and primate of Scotland. There was thus none of the Douglasses left about the King's person, except Parkhead, with his guard of one hundred men, in whose vigilance the others confided.

The King thought the time favourable for his escape. To lay all suspicion asleep, he pretended he was to rise next morning at an early hour, for the purpose of hunting the stag. Douglas of Parkhead, suspecting nothing,

retired to bed after placing his watch. But the King was no sooner in his private chamber, than he called a trusty page, named John Hart :—“ Jockie,” said he, “ dost thou love me ? ”

“ Better than myself,” answered the domestic.

“ And will you risk anything for me ? ”

“ My life, with pleasure,” said John Hart.

The King then explained his purpose, and dressing himself in the attire of a groom, he went with Hart to the stable, as if for the purpose of getting the horses ready for the next day’s hunt. The guards, deceived by their appearance, gave them no interruption. At the stables three good horses were saddled and in readiness, under charge of a yeoman, or groom, whom the King had intrusted with his design.

James mounted with his two servants, and galloped, during the whole night, as eager as a bird just escaped from a cage. At daylight he reached the bridge of Stirling, which was the only mode of passing the river Forth, except by boats. It was defended by gates, which the King, after passing through them, ordered to be closed, and directed the passage to be watched. He was a weary man when he reached Stirling Castle, where he was joyfully received by the governor whom his mother had placed in that strong fortress. The draw-bridges were raised, the portcullises dropt, guards set, and every measure of defence and precaution resorted to. But the King was so much afraid of again falling into the hands of the Douglasses, that, tired as he was, he would not go to sleep until the keys of the castle were placed in his own keeping, and laid underneath his pillow.

In the morning there was great alarm at Falkland.

Sir George Douglas had returned thither, on the night of the King's departure, about eleven o'clock. On his arrival, he enquired after the King, and was answered by the porter as well as the watchmen upon guard, that he was sleeping in his chamber, as he intended to hunt early in the morning. Sir George therefore retired to rest in full security. But the next morning he learned different tidings. One Peter Carmichael, bailie of Abernethy, knocked at the door of his chamber, and asked him if he knew "what the King was doing that morning?"

"He is in his chamber asleep," said Sir George.

"You are mistaken," answered Carmichael; "he passed the bridge of Stirling this last night."

On hearing this, Douglas started up in haste, went to the King's chamber, and knocked for admittance. When no answer was returned, he caused the door to be forced, and when he found the apartment empty, he cried, "Treason!—The King is gone, and none knows whither." Then he sent post to his brother, the Earl of Angus, and despatched messengers in every direction, to seek the King, and to assemble the Douglasses.

When the truth became known, the adherents of Angus rode in a body to Stirling; but the King was so far from desiring to receive them, that he threatened, by sound of trumpet, to declare any of the name of Douglas a traitor who should approach within twelve miles of his person, or who should presume to meddle with the administration of government. Some of the Douglasses inclined to resist this proclamation; but the Earl of Angus and his brother resolved to obey it, and withdrew to Linlithgow.

Soon afterwards, the King assembled around him the numerous nobility, who envied the power of Angus, or

had suffered injuries at his hands ; and, in open parliament, accused him of treason, declaring, that he had never been sure of his life all the while that he was in his power. A sentence of forfeiture was, therefore, passed against the Earl of Angus, and he was driven into exile, with all his friends and kinsmen. James V. retained, during his whole life, an implacable resentment against the Douglases, and never permitted one of the name to settle in Scotland while he lived.

He persevered in this resolution even under circumstances which rendered his unrelenting resentment ungenerous. Archibald Douglas of Kilspindie, the Earl of Angus's uncle, had been a personal favourite of the King before the disgrace of his family. He was so much recommended to James by his great strength, manly appearance, and skill in every kind of warlike exercise, that he was wont to call him his Graysteil, after the name of a champion in a romance then popular. Archibald, becoming rather an old man, and tired of his exile in England, resolved to try the King's mercy. He thought that as they had been so well acquainted formerly, and as he had never offended James personally, he might find favour from their old intimacy. He therefore threw himself in the King's way one day as he returned from hunting in the park at Stirling. It was several years since James had seen him, but he knew him at a great distance, by his firm and stately step, and said, "Yonder is my Graysteil, Archibald of Kilspindie." But when they met he showed no appearance of recognising his old servant. Douglas turned, and still hoping to obtain a glance of favourable recollection, ran along by the King's side ; and although James trotted his horse hard against the hill, and Douglas wore a heavy shirt of mail

under his clothes, for fear of assassination, yet Graysteil was at the castle gate as soon as the King. James passed him, and entered the castle ; but Douglas, exhausted with exertion, sat down at the gate and asked for a cup of wine. The hatred of the King against the name of Douglas was so well known, that no domestic about the court dared procure for the old warrior even this trifling refreshment. The King blamed, indeed, his servants for their courtesy, and even said, that but for his oath never to employ a Douglas, he would have received Archibald of Kilspindie into his service, as he had formerly known him a man of great ability. Yet he sent his commands to his poor Graysteil to retire to France, where he died heart-broken soon afterwards. Even Henry VIII. of England, himself of an unforgiving temper, blamed the implacability of James on this occasion, and quoted an old proverb,—

“A king’s face
Should give grace.”

CHAPTER XXVIII

JOHN ARMSTRONG

To seek het water beneath cauld ice,
Surely it is a great follie :
I have ask'd grace at a graceless face,
But there is nane for my men and me.
But had I kenn'd ere I came frae hame,
How unkind thou wou'dst been to me,
I wou'd ha'e keepit the Border side,
In spite of all thy force and thee.

Ballad of Johnnie Armstrong.

FREED from the stern control of the Douglas family, James V. now began to exercise the government in person, and displayed most of the qualities of a wise and good prince. He was handsome in his person, and resembled his father in the fondness for military exercises, and the spirit of chivalrous honour which James IV. loved to display. He also inherited his father's love of justice, and his desire to establish and enforce wise and equal laws, which should protect the weak against the oppression of the great. It was easy enough to make laws, but to put them in vigorous exercise was of much greater difficulty ; and in his attempt to accomplish this laudable purpose, James often incurred the ill-will of the more powerful nobles. He was a well-educated and accomplished man ; and like his ancestor, James I., was a poet and a musician. He had, however, his defects. He avoided his father's failing of profusion,

having no hoarded treasures to employ on pomp and show ; but he rather fell into the opposite fault, being of a temper too parsimonious ; and though he loved state and display, he endeavoured to gratify that taste as economically as possible, so that he has been censured as rather close and covetous. But, on the whole, James V. was an amiable man, and a good sovereign.

His first care was to bring the Borders of Scotland to some degree of order. These, as you were formerly told, were inhabited by tribes of men, forming each a different clan, as they were called, and obeying no orders, save those which were given by their chiefs. These chiefs were supposed to represent the first founder of the name, or family. The attachment of the clansmen to the chief was very great : indeed, they paid respect to no one else. In this the Borderers agreed with the Highlanders, as also in their love of plunder, and neglect of the general laws of the country. But the Border men wore no tartan dress, and served almost always on horseback, whereas the Highlanders acted always on foot.

The situation of these clans on the frontiers exposed them to constant war ; so that they thought of nothing else but of collecting bands of their followers together, and making incursions, without much distinction, on the English, on the Lowland (or inland) Scots, or upon each other. They paid little respect either to times of truce or treaties of peace, but exercised their depredations without regard to either, and often occasioned wars betwixt England and Scotland which would not otherwise have taken place.

It is said of a considerable family on the Borders, that when they had consumed all the cattle about the castle, a pair of spurs was placed on the table in a covered dish,

as a hint that they must ride out and fetch more. The chiefs and leading men told down their daughter's portions according to the plunder which they were able to collect in the course of a Michaelmas moon, when its prolonged light allowed them opportunity for their freebooting excursions. They were very brave in battle, but in time of peace they were a pest to their Scottish neighbours. As their insolence had risen to a high pitch after the field of Flodden had thrown the country into confusion, James V. resolved to take very severe measures against them.

James then assembled an army, in which warlike purposes were united with those of silvan sport ; for he ordered all the gentlemen in the wild districts which he intended to visit, to bring in their best dogs, as if his only purpose had been to hunt the deer in those desolate regions. This was intended to prevent the Borderers from taking the alarm, in which case they would have retreated into their mountains and fastnesses, from whence it would have been difficult to dislodge them.

These men had indeed no distinct idea of the offences which they had committed, and consequently no apprehension of the King's displeasure against them. The laws had been so long silent in that remote and disorderly country, that the outrages which were practised by the strong against the weak, seemed to the perpetrators the natural course of society, and to present nothing that was worthy of punishment.

Thus, as the King, in the beginning of his expedition, suddenly approached the castle of Piers Cockburn of Henderland, that baron was in the act of providing a great entertainment to welcome him, when James caused him to be suddenly seized on, and executed. Adam Scott of Tushielaw, called the King of the Border, met

the same fate. But an event of greater importance was the fate of John Armstrong of Gilnockie, near Langholm.

This freebooting chief had risen to great consequence, and the whole neighbouring district of England paid him *black mail*, that is, a sort of tribute, in consideration of which he forbore plundering them. He had a high idea of his own importance, and seems to have been unconscious of having merited any severe usage at the King's hands. On the contrary, he came to meet his sovereign at a place about ten miles from Hawick, called Carlinrigg chapel, richly dressed, and having with him twenty-four gentlemen, his constant retinue, as well attired as himself. The King, incensed to see a freebooter so gallantly equipped, commanded him instantly to be led to execution, saying, “ What wants this knave, save a crown, to be as magnificent as a king ? ” John Armstrong made great offers for his life, offering to maintain himself, with forty men, ready to serve the King at a moment's notice, at his own expense ; engaging never to hurt or injure any Scottish subject, as indeed had never been his practice ; and undertaking, that there was not a man in England, of whatever degree, duke, earl, lord, or baron, but he would engage, within a short time, to present him to the King, dead or alive. But when the King would listen to none of his offers, the robber-chief said, very proudly, “ I am but a fool to ask grace at a graceless face ; but had I guessed you would have used me thus, I would have kept the Border-side, in despite of the King of England and you both ; for I well know that King Henry would give the weight of my best horse in gold to know that I am sentenced to die this day.”

John Armstrong was led to execution, with all his men, and hanged without mercy. The people of the

inland counties were glad to be rid of him ; but on the Borders he was both missed and mourned, as a brave warrior, and a stout man-at-arms against England.

Such were the effects of the terror struck by these general executions, that James was said to have made “ the rush bush keep the cow ; ” that is to say, that even in this lawless part of the country, men dared no longer make free with property, and cattle might remain on their pastures unwatched.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE GOODMAN OF BALLENGIECH

When disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power.

Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause.

SCOTT.

JAMES V. had a custom of going about the country disguised as a private person, in order that he might hear complaints which might not otherwise reach his ears, and perhaps, that he might enjoy amusements which he could not have partaken of in his avowed royal character. This is also said to have been a custom of James IV., his father, and several adventures are related of what befel them on such occasions.

When the King travelled in disguise, he used a name which was known only to some of his principal nobility and attendants. He was called the Goodman (the tenant, that is) of Ballengiech. Ballengiech is a steep pass which leads down behind the castle of Stirling. Once upon a time, when the court was feasting in Stirling, the King sent for some venison from the neighbouring hills. The deer were killed, and put on horses' backs to be transported to Stirling. Unluckily they had to pass the castle gates of Arnpryor, belonging to a chief of the Buchanans, who chanced to have a considerable number

of guests with him. It was late, and the company were rather short of victuals, though they had more than enough of liquor. The chief, seeing so much fat venison passing his very door, seized on it; and to the expostulations of the keepers, who told him it belonged to King James, he answered insolently, that if James was King in Scotland, he, Buchanan, was king in Kippen; being the name of the district in which the castle of Arnpryor lay. On hearing what had happened, the King got on horseback, and rode instantly from Stirling to Buchanan's house, where he found a strong fierce-looking Highlander, with an axe on his shoulder, standing sentinel at the door. This grim warder refused the King admittance, saying, that the laird of Arnpryor was at dinner, and would not be disturbed. "Yet go up to the company, my good friend," said the King, "and tell him that the Goodman of Ballengiech is come to feast with the King of Kippen." The porter went grumbling into the house, and told his master that there was a fellow with a red beard at the gate, who called himself the Goodman of Ballengiech, who said he was come to dine with the King of Kippen. As soon as Buchanan heard these words, he knew that the King was come in person, and hastened down to kneel at James's feet, and to ask forgiveness for his insolent behaviour. But the King, who only meant to give him a fright, forgave him freely, and going into the castle, feasted on his own venison which Buchanan had intercepted. Buchanan of Arnpryor was ever afterwards called the King of Kippen.

Upon another occasion, King James, being alone and in disguise, fell into a quarrel with some gipsies, or other vagrants, and was assaulted by four or five of them. This chanced to be very near the bridge of Cramond; so

the King got on the bridge, which, as it was high and narrow, enabled him to defend himself with his sword against the number of persons by whom he was attacked. There was a poor man thrashing corn in a barn near by, who came out on hearing the noise of the scuffle, and seeing one man defending himself against numbers, gallantly took the King's part with his flail, to such good purpose, that the gipsies were obliged to fly. The husbandman then took the King into the barn, brought him a towel and water to wash the blood from his face and hands, and finally walked with him a little way towards Edinburgh, in case he should be again attacked. On the way, the King asked his companion what and who he was. The labourer answered, that his name was John Howieson, and that he was a bondsman on the farm of Braehead, near Cramond, which belonged to the King of Scotland. James then asked the poor man, if there was any wish in the world which he would particularly desire should be gratified ; and honest John confessed, he should think himself the happiest man in Scotland were he but proprietor of the farm on which he wrought as a labourer. He then asked the King, in turn, who *he* was ; and James replied, as usual, that he was the Goodman of Ballengiech, a poor man who had a small appointment about the palace ; but he added, that if John Howieson would come to see him on the next Sunday, he would endeavour to repay his manful assistance, and, at least, give him the pleasure of seeing the royal apartments.

John put on his best clothes, as you may suppose, and appearing at a postern gate of the palace, enquired for the Goodman of Ballengiech. The King had given orders that he should be admitted ; and John found his friend, the goodman, in the same disguise which he had formerly

worn. The King, still preserving the character of an inferior officer of the household, conducted John Howieson from one apartment of the palace to another, and was amused with his wonder and his remarks. At length, James asked his visitor if he should like to see the King ; to which John replied, nothing would delight him so much, if he could do so without giving offence. The Goodman of Ballengiech, of course, undertook that the King would not be angry. "But," said John, "how am I to know his grace from the nobles who will be all about him ?"—"Easily," replied his companion ; "all the others will be uncovered—the King alone will wear his hat or bonnet."

So speaking, King James introduced the countryman into a great hall, which was filled by the nobility and officers of the crown. John was a little frightened, and drew close to his attendant ; but was still unable to distinguish the King. "I told you that you should know him by his wearing his hat," said the conductor. "Then," said John, after he had again looked round the room, "it must be either you or me, for all but us two are bare-headed."

The King laughed at John's fancy ; and that the good yeoman might have occasion for mirth also, he made him a present of the farm of Braehead, which he had wished so much to possess, on condition that John Howieson, or his successors, should be ready to present an ewer and basin for the King to wash his hands, when his Majesty should come to Holyrood Palace, or should pass the bridge of Cramond.

This active and patriotic Prince ordered the mineral wealth of Scotland to be also enquired into. He obtained miners from Germany, who extracted both silver

and gold from the mines of Leadhills, in the upper part of Clydesdale. The gold was of fine quality, and found in quantity sufficient to supply metal for a very elegant gold coin, which, bearing on one side the head of James V. wearing a bonnet, has been thence called the Bonnet-piece. It is said, that upon one occasion the King invited the ambassadors of Spain, France, and other foreign countries, to hunt with him in Crawford Moor, the district in which lie the mines I have just mentioned. They dined in the castle of Crawford, a rude old fortress. The King made some apology for the dinner, which was composed of the game they had killed during the hunting and hawking of the day, but he assured his guests that the dessert would make them some amends, as he had given directions that it should consist of the finest fruits which the country afforded. The foreigners looked at each other in surprise, on hearing the King talk of fruits being produced amidst the black moors and barren mountains around them. But the dessert made its appearance in the shape of a number of covered saucers, one of which was placed before each guest, and being examined was found full of gold bonnet-pieces, which they were desired to accept as the fruit produced by the mountains of Crawford Moor. This new sort of dessert was no doubt as acceptable as the most delicate fruits of a southern climate.

CHAPTER XXX

WISHART AND BEATON

When hope fails, then vengeance burneth.

STEVENS.

WHEN James died in 1542, leaving the kingdom to his infant daughter Mary, the Scottish affairs were managed almost entirely by Cardinal Beaton, a statesman of great abilities, but a bigoted Catholic, and a man of a severe temper. Many cruelties were exercised ; but that which excited public feeling to the highest degree, was the barbarous death of George Wishart.

This martyr to the cause of Reformation was a man of honourable birth, great wisdom and eloquence, and of primitive piety. He preached the doctrines of the Reformed religion with zeal and with success, and was for some time protected against the efforts of the vengeful Catholics by the barons who had become converts to the Protestant faith. At length, however, he fell into the hands of the Cardinal, being surrendered to him by Lord Bothwell, and was conveyed to the castle of St Andrews, a strong fortress and palace belonging to the Cardinal as archbishop, and there thrown into a dungeon. Wishart was then brought to a public trial, for heresy, before the Spiritual Court, where the Cardinal presided. He was accused of preaching heretical doctrine, by two priests,

called Lauder and Oliphant, whose outrageous violence was strongly contrasted with the patience and presence of mind shown by the prisoner. He appealed to the authority of the Bible against that of the church of Rome ; but his judges were little disposed to listen to his arguments, and he was condemned to be burnt alive. The place of execution was opposite to the stately castle of the Cardinal, and Beaton himself sat upon the walls, which were hung with tapestry, to behold the death of his heretical prisoner. The spot was also carefully chosen, that the smoke of the pile might be seen as far as possible, to spread the greater terror. Wishart was then brought out, and fastened to a stake with iron chains. He was clad in a buckram garment, and several bags of gunpowder were tied round his body to hasten the operation of the fire. A quantity of fagots were disposed around the pile. While he stood in expectation of his cruel death, he cast his eyes towards his enemy the Cardinal, as he sat on the battlements of the castle, enjoying the dreadful scene.

“ Captain,” he said to him who commanded the guard, “ may God forgive yonder man, who lies so proudly on the wall—within a few days he shall be seen lying there in as much shame as he now shows pomp and vanity.”

The pile was then fired, the powder exploded, the flames arose, and Wishart was dismissed by a painful death to a blessed immortality.

Perhaps the last words of Wishart, which seemed to contain a prophetic spirit, incited some men to revenge his death. At any rate, the burning of that excellent person greatly increased the public detestation against the Cardinal, and a daring man stood forth to gratify the general desire, by putting him to death. This was

Norman Leslie, called the Master of Rothes, the same who led the men of Fife, at the battle of Ancrum-moor. It appears, that besides his share of the common hatred to the Cardinal as a persecutor, he had some private feud or cause of quarrel with him. With no more than sixteen men, Leslie undertook to assault the Cardinal in his own castle, amongst his numerous guards and domestics. It chanced that, as many workmen were still employed in labouring upon the fortifications of the castle, the wicket of the castle-gate was open early in the morning, to admit them to their work. The conspirators took advantage of this, and obtained possession of the entrance. Having thus gained admittance, they seized upon the domestics of the Cardinal, and turned them one by one out of the castle, then hastened to the Cardinal's chamber, who had fastened the door. He refused them entrance, until they threatened to apply fire, when, learning that Norman Leslie was without, the despairing prelate at length undid the door, and asked for mercy. Melville, one of the conspirators, told him he should only have such mercy as he had extended to George Wishart, and the other servants of God, who had been slain by his orders. He then, with his sword pointed to his breast, bid the Cardinal say his prayers to God, for his last hour was come. The conspirators now proceeded to stab their victim, and afterwards dragged the dead body to the walls, to show it to the citizens of St Andrews, his clients and dependents, who came in fury to demand what had become of their bishop. Thus his dead body really came to lie with open shame upon the very battlements of his own castle, where he had sat in triumph to behold Wishart's execution.

CHAPTER XXXI

QUEEN MARY'S YOUTH

Brief was her bloom with scarce one sunny day
'Twixt Pinkie's field and fatal Fotheringay.

GLASFORD BELL.

THE evil fortunes of Mary Stewart, who succeeded her father in the crown of Scotland, commenced at her very birth, and could scarce be considered as ceasing during the whole period of her life. Of all the unhappy princes of the line of Stewart, she was the most uniformly unfortunate. She was born on the 7th December, 1542, and, in a few days after, became, by her father's death, the infant queen of a distracted country.

Henry VIII. of England formed a plan of uniting the kingdoms of England and Scotland by a marriage between the infant Queen of Scotland and his only son Edward VI., then a child. But the impatient temper of the English monarch ruined his own scheme. He demanded the custody of the young Queen of Scotland till she should be of age to complete the marriage to be contracted by the present league, and he insisted that some of the strongest forts in the kingdom should be put into his hands. These proposals alarmed the national jealousy of the Scots, and the characteristic love of independence and liberty which we find that people have always displayed. The Scots resolved to prevent such a union by

marrying their young mistress to the Dauphin, that is, the eldest son of the King of France, and sending her to be brought up at the French court. The young Queen was embarked on board the French galleys in July 1548, accompanied by four young ladies of quality of her own age, destined to be her play-fellows in childhood, and her companions when she grew up. They all bore the same name with their mistress, and were called the Queen's Maries. Francis and Mary were married in 1558, and two years later Francis died. During her husband's life-time Mary exercised a great authority in France, for she possessed unbounded influence over his mind. After his death that influence and authority ceased. It must have been painful to a lofty mind like Mary's thus to endure coldness and neglect in the place where she had met with honour and obedience. She retired, therefore, from the court of France, and determined to return to her native kingdom of Scotland.

Mary Stewart, the Queen Dowager of France and the hereditary Queen of Scotland, was accounted the most beautiful and accomplished woman of her time. Her countenance was lovely ; she was tall, well-formed, elegant in all her motions, skilled in the exercises of riding and dancing, and possessed of all the female accomplishments which were in fashion at that period. Her education in France had been carefully attended to, and she had profited by the instruction she enjoyed. She was mistress of several languages, and understood state-affairs, in which her husband had often followed her advice. The beauty of Mary was enhanced by her great condescension, and by the good-humour and gaiety which she sometimes carried to the verge of excess. Her youth, for she was only eighteen when she returned to Scotland,



Mary's Farewell to France

increased the liveliness of her disposition. The Catholic religion, in which she had been strictly educated, was a great blemish in the eyes of her people ; but on the whole the nation expected her return with more hope and joy, than Mary herself entertained at the thought of exchanging the fine climate of France and the gaieties of its court, for the rough tempests and turbulent politics of her native country.

Mary set sail from France on 15th August, 1561. The English fleet was at sea, and there is great reason to believe that it had a purpose of intercepting the Queen of Scots, as a neighbour whose return was dreaded by Elizabeth. Occupied with anxious forebodings, the Queen remained on the deck of her galley, gazing on the coasts of France. Morning found her in the same occupation ; and when they vanished from her eyes, she exclaimed in sorrow, “ Farewell, farewell, happy France ; I shall never see thee more ! ”

She passed the English fleet under cover of a mist, and arrived at Leith on the 19th August, where little or no preparation had been made for her honourable reception. Such of the nobles as were in the capital hastened, however, to wait upon their young Queen, and convey her to Holyrood, the palace of her ancestors. Horses were provided to bring her and her train to Edinburgh ; but they were wretched ponies, and had such tattered furniture and accoutrements, that poor Mary, when she thought of the splendid palfreys and rich appointments at the court of France, could not forbear shedding tears. The people were, however, in their way, rejoiced to see her ; and about two hundred citizens of Edinburgh, each doing his best upon a three-stringed fiddle, played under her window all night, by way of welcome—a noisy

serenade, which deprived her of sleep after her fatigue. She took it as it was meant, nevertheless, and expressed her thanks to the perpetrators of this mistuned and mistimed concert.

Mary behaved with admirable prudence in the early years of her reign. She enchanted the common people by her grace and condescension, and while she sate in council, usually employed in some female work, she gained credit for her wisdom among the statesmen whom she consulted.

But a fatal crisis approached, which was eventually to plunge her into the utmost misery. She had no children by her deceased husband, the King of France, and her subjects were desirous that she should marry a second husband, a purpose which she herself entertained and encouraged. Her views turned towards a young nobleman of high birth, nearly connected both with her own family and that of Elizabeth. This was Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley, eldest son of the Earl of Lennox.

Young Darnley was remarkably tall and handsome, perfect in all external and showy accomplishments, but unhappily destitute of sagacity, prudence, steadiness of character, and exhibiting only doubtful courage, though extremely violent in his passions. Had this young man possessed a very moderate portion of sense, or even of gratitude, we might have had a different story to tell of Mary's reign—as it was, you will hear a very melancholy one.

Darnley, endeavouring to strengthen the interest which he had acquired in the Queen's affections, had recourse to the friendship of a man, of low rank, indeed, but who was understood to possess particular influence over the mind of Mary. This was an Italian of humble origin, called David Rizzio, who had been promoted from being

a menial in the Queen's family, to the confidential office of French secretary. His talents for music gave him frequent admission to Mary's presence, as she delighted in that art ; and his address, and arts of insinuation, gained him a considerable influence over her mind. It was almost necessary that the Queen should have near her person some confidential officer, skilled at once in languages and in business, through whom she might communicate with foreign states, and with her friends in France in particular. No such agent was likely to be found in Scotland, unless she had chosen a Catholic priest, which would have given more offence to her Protestant subjects, than even the employment of a man like Rizzio. Still the elevation of this person, a stranger, a Catholic, and a man of mean origin, to the rank of a minister of the crown—and, yet more, the personal familiarity to which the Queen condescended to admit him, and the airs of importance which this low-born foreigner pretended to assume, became the subject of offence to the proud Scottish nobles, and of vulgar scandal among the common people.

Darnley, anxious to strengthen his interest with the Queen on every hand, formed an intimacy with Rizzio, who employed all the arts of flattery and observance to gain possession of his favour, and unquestionably was serviceable to him in advancing his suit. The Queen, in the meanwhile, exerted herself to remove the obstacles to her union with Darnley, and with such success, that, with the approbation of far the greater part of her subjects, they were married at Edinburgh on the 29th July, 1565.

Mary soon found that she had a formidable enemy in the foolish and passionate husband whom she had chosen. This headstrong young man behaved to his

wife with great disrespect, both as a woman and as a queen, and gave himself up to intoxication, and other disgraceful vices. Although already possessed of more power than fitted his capacity or age, for he was but nineteen, he was importunate in his demands for obtaining what was called in Scotland the Crown Matrimonial ; that is, the full equality of royal right in the crown with his consort. Until he obtained this eminence he was not held to be King, though called so in courtesy. He was only the husband of the Queen.

This crown matrimonial had been bestowed on Mary's first husband, Francis, and Darnley was determined to be possessed of the same rank. But Mary, whose bounty had already far exceeded his deserts, as well as his gratitude, was resolved not to make this last concession, at least without the advice and consent of the Parliament.

The childish impatience of Darnley made him regard with mortal hatred whatever interfered with the instant execution of his wishes ; and his animosity on this occasion turned against the Italian secretary, once his friend, but whom he now esteemed his deadly foe, because he supposed that Rizzio encouraged the Queen in resisting his hasty ambition. His resentment against the unhappy stranger rose to such a height, that he threatened to poniard him with his own hand ; and as Rizzio had many enemies, and no friend save his mistress, Darnley easily procured instruments, and those of no mean rank, to take the execution of his revenge on themselves.

The chief of Darnley's accomplices, on this unhappy occasion, was James Douglas, Earl of Morton, chancellor of the kingdom, tutor and uncle to the Earl of Angus (who chanced then to be a minor), and administrator, therefore, of all the power of the great house of Douglas. He was a

nobleman of high military talent and great political wisdom ; but although a pretender to sanctity of life, his actions show him to have been a wicked and unscrupulous man. Notwithstanding he was chancellor of the kingdom, and therefore bound peculiarly to respect the laws, he did not hesitate to enter into the young King's cruel and unlawful purpose. Lord Ruthven too, whose frame was exhausted by illness, nevertheless undertook to buckle on his armour for the enterprise ; and they had no difficulty in finding other agents.

It would have been easy to have seized on Rizzio, and disposed of him as the Scottish peers at the bridge of Lauder used the favourites of James III. But this would not have accomplished the revenge of Darnley, who complained that the Queen showed this mean Italian more civility than she did to himself, and therefore took the barbarous resolution of seizing him in her very presence.

Queen Mary, like her father, James V., was fond of laying aside the state of a sovereign, and indulging in small private parties, quiet, as she termed them, and merry. On these occasions, she admitted her favourite domestics to her table, and Rizzio seems frequently to have had that honour. On the 9th of March, 1566, six persons had partaken of supper in a small cabinet adjoining the Queen's bedchamber, and having no entrance save through it. Rizzio was of the number. About seven in the evening, the gates of the palace were occupied by Morton, with a party of two hundred men ; and a select band of the conspirators, headed by Darnley himself, came into the Queen's apartment by a secret staircase. Darnley first entered the cabinet, and stood for an instant in silence, gloomily eyeing his victim. Lord Ruthven followed in complete armour, looking pale and

ghastly, as one scarcely recovered from long sickness. Others crowded in after them, till the little closet was full of armed men. While the Queen demanded the purpose of their coming, Rizzio, who saw that his life was aimed at, got behind her, and clasped the folds of her gown, that the respect due to her person might protect him. The assassins threw down the table, and seized on the unfortunate object of their vengeance, while Darnley himself took hold of the Queen, and forced Rizzio and her asunder. It was their intention, doubtless, to have dragged Rizzio out of Mary's presence, and to have killed him elsewhere ; but their fierce impatience hurried them into instant murder. George Douglas, called the postulate of Arbroath, a natural brother of the Earl of Morton, set the example, by snatching Darnley's dagger from his belt, and striking Rizzio with it. He received many other blows. They dragged him through the bedroom and antechamber, and despatched him at the head of the staircase, with no less than fifty-six wounds. Ruthven, after all was over, fatigued with his exertions, sate down in the Queen's presence, and, begging her pardon for the liberty, called for a drink to refresh him, as if he had been doing the most harmless thing in the world.

The witnesses, the actors, and the scene of this cruel tragedy, render it one of the most extraordinary which history records. The cabinet and the bedroom still remain in the same condition in which they were at the time ; and the floor near the head of the stair bears visible marks of the blood of the unhappy Rizzio. The Queen continued to beg his life with prayers and tears ; but when she learned that he was dead, she dried her tears.—“ I will now,” she said, “ study revenge.”

The Night of Rizzio's Murder

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CHAPTER XXXII

KIRK O' FIELD

Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE conspirators, who had committed the cruel action entirely or chiefly to gratify Darnley, reckoned themselves, of course, secure of his protection. They united themselves with Murray and his associates, who were just returned from England according to appointment, and agreed upon a course of joint measures. The Queen, it was agreed, should be under restraint in Edinburgh Castle, or elsewhere; and Murray and Morton were to rule the state under the name of Darnley, who was to obtain the crown matrimonial, which he had so anxiously desired. But all this scheme was ruined by the defection of Darnley himself. As fickle as he was vehement, and as timorous as he had shown himself cruel, Rizzio was so sooner slain than Darnley became terrified at what had been done, and seemed much disposed to deny having given any authority for the crime.

Finding her weak-minded husband in a state between remorse and fear, Mary prevailed on him to take part against the very persons whom he had instigated to the

late atrocious proceeding. Darnley and Mary escaped together out of Holyrood House, and fled to Dunbar, where the Queen issued a proclamation which soon drew many faithful followers around her.

Queen Mary was now once more in possession of authority, but much disturbed and vexed by the silly conduct of her husband, whose absurdities and insolences were not abated by the consequences of Rizzio's death ; so that the royal pair continued to be upon the worst terms with each other, though disguised under a species of reconciliation.

On the 19th of June, 1566, a son, afterwards James VI., was born to Queen Mary. After a splendid solemnity at christening the heir of Scotland, Queen Mary seems to have turned her mind towards settling the disorders of her nobility ; and, sacrificing her own justifiable resentment, she yielded so far as to grant pardon to all those concerned in the murder of Rizzio. Two men of low rank, and no more, had been executed for that crime. Lord Ruthven, the principal actor, had died in England, talking and writing as composedly of " the slaughter of David," as if it had been the most indifferent, if not meritorious, action possible. George Douglas, who struck the first blow, and Ker of Faldonside, another ruffian who offered his pistol at the Queen's bosom in the fray, were exempted from the general pardon. Morton and all the others were permitted to return, to plan new treasons and murders.

I shall endeavour to give you a simple outline of the facts, as they are admitted and proved on all sides.

James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, a man in middle age, had for several years played a conspicuous part in these troubled times. He had sided with the Queen

Regent against the Reformed party, and was in general supposed to be attached rather to the reigning Queen, than to any of the factions who opposed her. He was head of the powerful family of Hepburn, and possessed great influence in East-Lothian and Berwickshire, where excellent soldiers could always be obtained. In his morals Bothwell was wild and licentious, irregular and daring in his ambition ; and although his history does not show many instances of personal courage, yet in his early life he had the reputation of possessing it. He had been in danger on the occasion of Rizzio's murder, being supposed, from his regard for the Queen, to have been desirous of preventing that cruel insult to her person and authority. As this nobleman displayed great zeal for Mary's cause, she was naturally led to advance him at court, until many persons, and particularly the preachers of the Reformed religion, thought that she admitted to too great intimacy a man of so fierce and profligate a character ; and a numerous party among her subjects accused the Queen of being fonder of Bothwell than was becoming.

In the meantime, the dissensions between Darnley and the Queen continued to increase ; and while he must have been disliked by Mary from their numerous quarrels, and the affronts he put upon her, as well as from his share in the murder of Rizzio, those who had been concerned with him in that last crime, considered him as a poor mean-spirited wretch, who, having engaged his associates in so daring an act, had afterwards betrayed and deserted them. His latter conduct showed no improvement in either sense or spirit. He pretended he would leave the kingdom, and by this and other capricious resolutions, hastily adopted and abandoned, he so far alienated the affections of the Queen, that many

of the unscrupulous and plotting nobles, by whom she was surrounded, formed the idea, that it would be very agreeable to Mary if she could be freed from her union with this unreasonable and ill-tempered young man.

The first proposal made to her was, that she should be separated from Darnley by a divorce. Bothwell, Maitland, Morton, and Murray, are said to have joined in pressing such a proposal upon the Queen, who was then residing at Craigmillar Castle, near Edinburgh ; but she rejected it steadily. A conspiracy of a darker kind was then agitated, for the murder of the unhappy Darnley ; and Bothwell seems to have entertained little doubt that Mary, thus rid of an unacceptable husband, would choose him for a successor.

While these schemes were in agitation against his life, Darnley fell ill at Glasgow, and his indisposition proved to be the small-pox. The Queen sent her physician, and after an interval went herself to wait upon him, and an apparent reconciliation was effected between them. They came together to Edinburgh on the 31st January, 1566-67. The King was lodged in a religious house called the Kirk of Field, just without the walls of the city. The Queen and the infant Prince were accommodated in the palace of Holyrood. The reason assigned for their living separate was the danger of the child catching the small-pox. But the Queen showed much attention to her husband, visiting him frequently ; and they never seemed to have been on better terms than when the conspiracy against Darnley's life was on the eve of being executed. Meanwhile Darnley and his groom of the chamber were alone during the night time, and separated from any other persons, when measures were taken for his destruction in the following horrible manner :—

On the evening of the 9th February, several persons, kinsmen, retainers, and servants of the Earl of Bothwell, came in secret to the Kirk of Field. They had with them a great quantity of gunpowder ; and by means of false keys they obtained entrance into the cellars of the building, where they disposed the powder in the vaults under Darnley's apartment, and especially beneath the spot where his bed was placed. About two hours after midnight upon the ensuing morning, Bothwell himself came disguised in a riding-cloak, to see the execution of the cruel project. Two of his ruffians went in and took means of firing the powder, by lighting a piece of slow-burning match at one end, and placing the other amongst the gunpowder. They remained for some time watching the event, and Bothwell became so impatient, that it was with difficulty he was prevented from entering the house, to see whether the light had not been extinguished by some accident. One of his accomplices, by looking through a window, ascertained that it was still burning. The explosion presently took place, blew up the Kirk of Field, and alarmed the whole city. The body of Darnley was found in the adjoining orchard. The bed in which he lay had preserved him from all action of the fire, which occasioned a general belief that he and his chamber-groom, who was found in the same situation, had been strangled and removed before the house was blown up. But this was a mistake. It is clearly proved, by the evidence of those who were present at the event, that there were no means employed but gunpowder—a mode of destruction sufficiently powerful to have rendered any other unnecessary.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE EARL OF BOTHWELL

Evil was his Good,
For all too long in blood had he been nurst,
And ne'er was earth with verier tyrant curst,
Bold man and bad.

SOUTHEY.

THE horrible murder of the unhappy Darnley excited the strongest suspicions, and the greatest discontent, in the city of Edinburgh, and through the whole kingdom. Bothwell was pointed out by the general voice as the author of the murder ; and as he still continued to enjoy the favour of Mary, her reputation was not spared. To have brought this powerful criminal to an open and impartial trial, would have been the only way for the Queen to recover her popularity ; and Mary made a show of doing this public justice, but under circumstances which favoured the criminal.

Lennox, father of the murdered Darnley, had, as was his natural duty, accused Bothwell of the murder of his son. But he received little countenance in prosecuting the accused. Everything seemed to be done as hastily as if it were determined to defeat the operations of justice.

It was a usual thing in Scotland for persons accused of crimes, to come to the bar of a court of justice attended by all their friends, retainers, and dependents, the number of whom was frequently so great, that the judges and

accusers were over-awed, and became afraid to proceed in the investigation ; so that the purposes of justice were for the time frustrated. Bothwell, conscious of guilt, was desirous to use this means of protection to the utmost. He appeared in Edinburgh with full five thousand attendants. Two hundred chosen musketeers kept close by his side, and guarded the doors of the court as soon as the criminal had entered. In such circumstances, there could be no chance of a fair trial. Lennox did not appear, saving by one of his vassals, who protested against the proceedings of the day. No charge was made, —no proof of innocence, of course, was required,—and a jury, consisting of nobles and gentlemen of the first rank, acquitted Bothwell of a crime of which all the world believed him to be guilty.

The public mind remained dissatisfied with this mockery of justice ; but Bothwell, without regarding the murmurs of the people, hurried forward to possess himself of the situation which he had made vacant by the murder of Darnley. He convened a number of the principal nobility, at a feast given in a tavern, and prevailed on them to sign a bond, in which they not only declared Bothwell altogether innocent of the King's death, but recommended him as the fittest person whom her Majesty could choose for a husband.

The Earl of Bothwell, thus authorised by the apparent consent of the nobility, and, no doubt, thinking himself secure of the Queen's approbation, suddenly appeared at the bridge of Cramond, with a thousand horse, as Mary arrived there on her return from Stirling to Edinburgh. Bothwell took the Queen's horse by the bridle, and surrounding and disarming her attendants, he led her, as if by an appearance of force, to the strong castle of

Dunbar, of which he was governor. On this occasion Mary seems neither to have attempted to resist, nor to have expressed that feeling of anger and shame which would have been proper to her as a queen and as a woman. Her attendants were assured by the officers of Bothwell, that she was carried off in consequence of her own consent; and considering that such an outrage was offered to a sovereign of her high rank and bold spirit, her tame submission and silence under it seem scarce otherwise to be accounted for. They remained at Dunbar ten days, after which they again appeared in Edinburgh, apparently reconciled ; the Earl carefully leading the Queen's palfrey and conducting her up to the castle, the government of which was held by one of his adherents.

Whilst these strange proceedings took place, Bothwell had been able to procure a sentence of divorce against his wife, a sister of the Earl of Huntly. On the 12th of May, the Queen made a public declaration, that she forgave Bothwell the late violence which he had committed, and that, although she was at first highly displeased with him, she was now resolved not only to grant him her pardon, but also to promote him to further honours. She was as good as her word, for she created him Duke of Orkney ; and, on the 15th of the same month, did Mary, with unpardonable indiscretion, commit the great folly of marrying this ambitious and profligate man, stained as he was with the blood of her husband.

The Queen was not long in discovering that by this unhappy marriage she had gotten a more ruthless and wicked husband, than she had in the flexible Darnley. Bothwell used her grossly ill, and being disappointed in his plans of getting the young Prince into his keeping, used such upbraiding language to Mary that she prayed

for a knife with which to stab herself, rather than endure his ill treatment.

In the meantime, the public discontent rose high, and Morton, Maitland, and others, who had been privy to the murder of Darnley, placed themselves, notwithstanding, at the head of a numerous party of the nobility, who resolved to revenge his death, and remove Bothwell from his usurped power. They took arms hastily, and had nearly surprised the Queen and Bothwell, while feasting in the castle of the Lord Borthwick, from whence they fled to Dunbar, the Queen being concealed in the disguise of a page.

The confederated lords marched towards Dunbar, and the Queen and Bothwell, having assembled an army, advanced to the encounter, and met them on Carberry Hill. This was on the 15th of June, 1567. Mary would have acted more wisely in postponing the threatened action, for the Hamiltons, in great force, were on their way to join her. But she had been accustomed to gain advantages by rapid and ready movements, and was not at first sufficiently aware what an unfavourable impression existed against her even in her own army. Many, if not most, of those troops who had joined the Queen, had little inclination to fight in Bothwell's cause. He himself, in a bravado, offered to prove his innocence of Darnley's murder, by a duel in the lists with any of the opposite lords who should affirm his guilt. The valiant Kirkaldy of Grange, Murray of Tullibardin, and Lord Lindsay of the Byres, successively undertook the combat; but Bothwell found exceptions to each of them, and, finally, it appeared that this wicked man had not courage to fight with any one in that quarrel. In the meantime, the Queen's army began to disband, and it

became obvious that they would not fight in her cause while they considered it as the same with that of Bothwell. She therefore recommended to him to fly from the field of action ; an advice which he was not slow in following, riding to Dunbar as fast as he could, and from thence escaping by sea.

Mary surrendered herself; upon promise of respect and kind treatment, to the laird of Grange, and was conducted by him to the headquarters of the confederate army. When she arrived there, the lords received her with silent respect ; but some of the common soldiers hooted at and insulted her, until Grange, drawing his sword, compelled them to be silent. The lords adopted the resolution of returning to the capital, and conveying Mary thither, surrounded by their troops.

As the unhappy Queen approached Edinburgh, led as it were in triumph by the victors, the most coarse and insulting behaviour was used towards her by the lower classes. There was a banner prepared for this insurrection, displaying, on the one side, the portrait of Darnley, as he lay murdered under a tree in the fatal orchard, with these words embroidered, “ Judge, and avenge my cause, O Lord ! ” and on the other side, the little Prince on his knees, holding up his hands, as if praying to Heaven to punish his father’s murderers. As the Queen rode through the streets, with her hair loose, her garments disordered, covered with dust, and overpowered with grief, shame and fatigue, this fatal flag was displayed before her eyes, while the voices of the rude multitude upbraided her with having been an accomplice in Darnley’s murder. The same cries were repeated, and the same insulting banner displayed, before the windows of the Lord Provost’s house, to which she was for a few hours committed as

if a prisoner. The better class of craftsmen and citizens were at length moved by her sorrows, and showed such a desire to take her part, that the Lords determined to remove her from the city, where respect to her birth and misfortunes seemed likely to create partisans, in spite of her own indiscretions, and the resentment of her enemies. Accordingly, on the next evening, being 16th June, 1567, Mary, in disguised apparel, and escorted by a strong armed force, was conveyed from Holyrood to the castle of Lochleven, which stands on a little island, surrounded by the lake of the same name, and was there detained a prisoner.

Kirkaldy of Grange followed Bothwell with two vessels, and had nearly surprised him in the harbour of Lerwick, the fugitive making his escape at one issue of the bay, while Grange entered at another ; and Bothwell might even then have been captured, but that Grange's ship ran upon a rock, and was wrecked, though the crew escaped. Bothwell was only saved for a more melancholy fate. He took to piracy in the Northern Seas, in order to support himself and his sailors. He was in consequence assaulted and taken by some Danish ships of war. The Danes threw him into the dungeons of the castle of Malmay, where he died in captivity, about the end of the year 1576. It is said, that this atrocious criminal confessed at his death, that he had conducted the murder of Darnley, by the assistance of Murray, Maitland, and Morton, and that Mary was altogether guiltless of that crime. But there is little reliance to be placed on the declaration of so wicked a man, even if it were certain he had made it.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT

She sees what seed long sown, ripened of late,
Bears this sad crop ; and she discerns her fate.

MICHAEL FIELD.

MANTIME, poor Mary reaped the full consequences of Bothwell's guilt, and of her own infatuated attachment to him. She was imprisoned in a rude and inconvenient tower, on a small islet, where there was scarce room to walk fifty yards ; and not even the intercession of Queen Elizabeth, who seems for the time to have been alarmed at the successful insurrection of subjects against their sovereign, could procure any mitigation of her captivity. There was a proposal to proceed against the Queen as an accomplice in Darnley's murder, and to take her life under that pretence. But the Lords of the Secret Council resolved to adopt somewhat of a gentler course, by compelling Mary to surrender her crown to her son, then an infant, and to make the Earl of Murray Regent during the child's minority. Deeds to this purpose were drawn up, and sent to the castle of Lochleven, to be signed by the Queen. Lord Lindsay, the rudest, most bigoted, and fiercest of the confederated Lords, was deputed to enforce Mary's compliance with the commands of the Council. He behaved with such peremptory brutality as had per-

The Escape of Mary from Lochleven



haps been expected, and was so unmanly as to pinch with his iron glove the arm of the poor Queen, to compel her to subscribe the deeds.

If Mary had any quarter to which, in her disastrous condition, she might look for love and favour, it was to her brother Murray. She may have been criminal—she had certainly been grossly infatuated—yet she deserved her brother's kindness and compassion. She had loaded him with favours, and pardoned him considerable offences. Unquestionably she expected more favour from him than she met with. But Murray was ambitious ; and ambition breaks through the ties of blood, and forgets the obligations of gratitude. He visited his imprisoned sister and benefactress in Lochleven Castle, but it was not to bring her comfort ; on the contrary, he pressed all her errors on her with such hardhearted severity, that she burst into floods of tears, and abandoned herself to despair.

Murray accepted of the regency, and in doing so broke all remaining ties of tenderness betwixt himself and his sister. He was now at the head of the ruling faction, consisting of what were called the King's Lords ; while such of the nobility as desired that Mary, being now freed from the society of Bothwell, should be placed at liberty, and restored to the administration of the kingdom, were termed the Queen's Party. The strict and sagacious government of Murray imposed silence and submission for a time upon this last-named faction ; but a singular incident changed the face of things for a moment, and gave a gleam of hope to the unfortunate captive.

Sir William Douglas, the Laird of Lochleven, owner of the castle where Mary was imprisoned, was a half-brother by the mother's side of the Regent Murray.

This baron discharged with severe fidelity the task of Mary's jailor ; but his youngest brother, George Douglas, became more sensible to the Queen's distress, and perhaps to her beauty, than to the interests of the Regent, or of his own family. A plot laid by him for the Queen's deliverance was discovered, and he was expelled from the island in consequence. But he kept up a correspondence with a kinsman of his own, called Little Douglas, a boy of fifteen or sixteen, who had remained in the castle. On Sunday, the 2nd May, 1568, this little William Douglas, contrived to steal the keys of the castle while the family were at supper. He let Mary and her attendant out of the tower when all had gone to rest—locked the gates of the castle to prevent pursuit—placed the Queen and her waiting-woman in a little skiff, and rowed them to the shore, throwing the keys of the castle into the lake in the course of their passage. Just when they were about to set out on this adventurous voyage, the youthful pilot had made a signal, by a light in a particular window visible at the upper end of the lake, to intimate that all was safe. Lord Seaton and a party of the Hamiltons were waiting at the landing-place. The Queen instantly mounted, and hurried off to Niddry Castle, in West Lothian ; she proceeded next day to Hamilton. The news flew like lightning throughout the country, and spread enthusiasm everywhere. The people remembered Mary's gentleness, grace, and beauty—they remembered her misfortunes also—and if they reflected on her errors, they thought they had been punished with sufficient severity. On Sunday, Mary was a sad and helpless captive in a lonely tower. On the Saturday following, she was at the head of a powerful confederacy, by which nine earls, nine bishops, eighteen lords, and many gentle-

men of high rank, engaged to defend her person and restore her power. But this gleam of success was only temporary.

It was the Queen's purpose to place her person in security in the castle of Dunbarton and her army, under the Earl of Argyle, proposed to carry her thither in a species of triumph. The Regent was lying at Glasgow with much inferior forces ; but, with just confidence in his own military skill, as well as the talents of Morton, and the valour of Kirkaldy, and other experienced soldiers, he determined to meet the Queen's Lords in their proposed march, and to give them battle.

On 13th May, 1568, Murray occupied the village of Langside, which lay full in the march of the Queen's army. The Hamiltons, and other gentlemen of Mary's troop, rushed forth with ill-considered valour to dispute the pass. They fought, however, with obstinacy, after the Scottish manner ; that is, they pressed on each other front to front, each fixing his spear in his opponent's target, and then endeavouring to bear him down, as two bulls do when they encounter each other. Morton decided the battle, by attacking the flank of the Hamiltons, while their column was closely engaged in the front. The measure was decisive, and the Queen's army was completely routed.

Queen Mary beheld this final and fatal defeat from a castle called Crookstane, about four miles from Paisley, where she and Darnley had spent some happy days after their marriage, and which, therefore, must have been the scene of bitter recollections. It was soon evident that there was no resource but in flight, and, escorted by Lord Herries and a few faithful followers, she rode sixty miles before she stopped at the Abbey of Dundrennan,

in Galloway. From this place she had the means of retreating either to France or England, as she should ultimately determine. In France she was sure to have been well received ; but England afforded a nearer, and, as she thought, an equally safe place of refuge.

Forgetting, therefore, the various causes of emulation which existed betwixt Elizabeth and herself, and remembering only the smooth and flattering words which she had received from her sister sovereign, it did not occur to the Scottish Queen that she should incur any risk by throwing herself upon the hospitality of England. It may also be supposed, that poor Mary, amongst whose faults want of generosity could not be reckoned, judged of Elizabeth according to the manner in which she would herself have treated the Queen of England in the same situation. She therefore resolved to take refuge in Elizabeth's kingdom, in spite of the opposition of her wiser attendants. They kneeled and entreated in vain. She entered the fatal boat, crossed the Solway, and delivered herself up to a gentleman named Lowther, the English deputy-warden. Much surprised, doubtless, at the incident, he sent express to inform Queen Elizabeth ; and receiving the Scottish Queen with as much respect as he had the means of showing, lodged her in Carlisle Castle.

CHAPTER XXXV

TROUBLous TIMES

War, war is still the cry,—“ war even to the knife ! ”

BYRON.

The death shot parts ! the charger springs,
Wild rises tumult’s startling roar,
And Murray’s plumy helmet rings,—
Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

SCOTT.

AFTER the battle of Langside, six of the Hamiltons, who had been most active on that occasion, were sentenced to die, as being guilty of treason against James VI., in having espoused his mother’s cause. In this doom there was little justice, considering how the country was divided between the claims of the mother and the son. But the decree was not acted upon, and the persons condemned received their pardon through the mediation of John Knox with the Regent.

One of the individuals thus pardoned was Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, a man of fierce and vindictive character. Like others in his condition, he was punished by the forfeiture of his property, although his life was spared. His wife had brought him, as her portion, the lands of Woodhouselee, near Roslin, and these were bestowed by Murray upon one of his favourites. This person exercised the right so rudely, as to turn Hamilton’s wife out of her own house undressed, and unprotected from the fury of the weather. In consequence of this brutal treatment,

she became insane, and died. Her husband vowed revenge, not on the actual author of his misfortune, but upon the Regent Murray, whom he considered as the original cause of it, and whom his family prejudices induced him to regard as the usurper of the sovereign power, and the oppressor of the name and house of Hamilton. There is little doubt that the Archbishop of Saint Andrews, and some others of his name, encouraged Bothwellhaugh in this desperate resolution.

The assassin took his measures with every mark of deliberation. Having learnt that the Regent was to pass through Linlithgow on a certain day, he secretly introduced himself into an empty house belonging to the Archbishop of St Andrews, which had in front a wooden balcony looking upon the street. Bothwellhaugh hung a black cloth on the wall of the apartment where he lay that his shadow might not be seen from without, and spread a mattress on the floor, that the sound of his feet might not be heard from beneath. To secure his escape he fastened a fleet horse in the garden behind the house, and pulled down the lintel stones from the posts of the garden door, so that he might be able to pass through it on horseback. He also strongly barricaded the front door of the house, which opened to the street of the town. Having thus prepared all for concealment until the deed was done, and for escape afterwards, he armed himself with a loaded carabine, shut himself up in the lonely chamber, and waited the arrival of his victim.

Some friend of Murray transmitted to him a hint of the danger which he might incur, in passing through the street of a place in which he was known to have enemies, and advised that he should avoid it by going round on the outside of the town ; or, at least, by riding hastily

The Assassination of Murray



past the lodging which was more particularly suspected, as belonging to the Hamiltons. But the Regent, thinking that the step recommended would have an appearance of timidity, held on his way through the crowded street. As he came opposite the fatal balcony, his horse being somewhat retarded by the number of spectators, Bothwellhaugh had time to take a deliberate aim. He fired the carabine, and the Regent fell, mortally wounded. The ball, after passing through his body, killed the horse of a gentleman who rode on his right hand. His attendants rushed furiously at the door of the house from which the shot had issued ; but Bothwellhaugh's precautions had been so securely taken that they were unable to force their entrance till he had mounted his good horse, and escaped through the garden gate. He was notwithstanding pursued so closely, that he had very nearly been taken ; but after spur and whip had both failed, he pricked his horse with his dagger, compelled him to take a desperate leap over a ditch, which his pursuers were unable to cross, and thus made his escape.

The Regent died in the course of the night, leaving a character, which has been, perhaps, too highly extolled by one class of authors, and too much depreciated by another, according as his conduct to his sister was approved or condemned.

Upon the death of Murray, Lennox was chosen Regent. He was the father of the murdered Darnley, yet showed no excessive thirst of vengeance. He endeavoured to procure a union of parties, for the purpose of domestic peace. But men's minds on both sides had become too much exasperated against each other. The Queen's party was strengthened by Maitland of Lethington and Kirkaldy of Grange joining that faction, after having

been long the boast of that of the King. Lethington was one of the ablest men in Scotland, and Kirkaldy was certainly one of the bravest. He was, besides, Governor of Edinburgh Castle, and his declaring that he held that important place for the Queen gave great spirit to Mary's adherents. At the same time, they were deprived of a stronghold of scarcely inferior consequence, by the loss of Dunbarton Castle in the following extraordinary manner.

This fortress is one of the strongest places in the world. It is situated on a rock, which rises almost perpendicularly from a level plain to the height of several hundred feet. On the summit of this rock the buildings are situated, and as there is only one access from below, which rises by steps, and is strongly guarded and fortified, the fort might be almost held to be impregnable, that is, impossible to be taken. One Captain Crawford of Jordanhill, a distinguished adherent of the King's party, resolved nevertheless, to make an attempt on this formidable castle.

He took advantage of a misty and moonless night to bring to the foot of the castle-rock the scaling-ladders which he had provided, choosing for his terrible experiment the place where the rock was highest, and where less pains were taken to keep a regular guard. This choice was fortunate ; for the first ladder broke with the weight of the men who attempted to mount, and the noise of the fall must have betrayed them, had there been any sentinel within hearing. Crawford, assisted by a soldier who had deserted from the castle, and was acting as his guide, renewed the attempt in person, and having scrambled up to a projecting ledge of rock where there was some footing, contrived to make fast the ladder, by

tying it to the roots of a tree, which grew about midway up the rock. Here they found a small flat surface, sufficient, however, to afford footing to the whole party, which was, of course, very few in number. In scaling the second precipice, another accident took place :—One of the party, subject to epileptic fits, was seized by one of these attacks, brought on perhaps by terror, while he was in the act of climbing up the ladder. His illness made it impossible for him either to ascend or descend. To have slain the man would have been a cruel expedient, besides that the fall of his body might have alarmed the garrison. Crawford caused him, therefore, to be tied to the ladder, which they turned, and thus mounted with ease. When the party gained the summit, they slew the sentinel ere he had time to give the alarm, and easily surprised the slumbering garrison, who had trusted too much to the security of their castle to keep good watch.

The regency of Scotland being vacant in 1572, the Earl of Morton was appointed to the post. During the greater part of his tenure of office Scotland enjoyed the blessings of peace and tranquillity.

But the advantages which the kingdom derived from peace, were in some measure destroyed by the corrupt and oppressive government of the Regent, who turned his thoughts almost entirely to amassing treasure, by every means in his power. The extensive property, which formerly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church was a mine out of which Morton and the other great nobles contrived to work for themselves a great deal of wealth. This they did chiefly by dealing with those who were placed in the room of the abbots and priors as commendators, by which word the Scots distinguished a layman who obtained possession of an ecclesiastical

benefice. To these commendators the nobles applied, and, by fair means or force, compelled them to make over and transfer to them the property of the abbeys, or at least to grant it to them in long leases for a trifling rent. That you may understand how this sort of business was managed I will give you a curious instance of it :—

In August, 1570, Allan Stewart, commendator of the abbacy of Crossraguel, in Ayrshire, was prevailed on to visit the Earl of Cassilis, who conveyed him, partly against his will, to a lonely tower, which overhangs the sea, called the Black Vault of Denure, the ruins of which are yet visible. He was treated for some time kindly ; but as his arms and servants were removed from him, he soon saw reason to consider himself less as a friendly guest than as a prisoner, to whom some foul play was intended. At length, the Earl conveyed his guest into a private chamber, in which there was no furniture of any kind excepting a huge clumsy iron grate or gridiron, beneath which was a fire of charcoal. “ And now, my lord abbot,” said the Earl of Cassilis, “ will you be pleased to sign these deeds ? ” And so saying, he laid before him leases and other papers, transferring the whole lands of the abbacy of Crossraguel to the Earl himself. The commendator refused to yield up the property or to subscribe the deeds. A party of ruffians then entered, and seizing the unhappy man, stripped him of his clothes, and forcibly stretched him on the iron bars, where he lay, scorched by the fire beneath, while they basted him with oil, as a cook bastes the joint of meat which she roasts upon a spit. The agony of such torture was not to be endured. The poor man cried pitifully, begging they would put him to instant death, rather than subject him

to this lingering misery, and offered his purse, with the money it contained, to any who would in mercy shoot him through the head. At length he was obliged to promise to subscribe whatever the Earl wished, rather than endure the excessive torture any longer. The letters and leases being then presented to him, he signed them with his half-roasted hand, while the Earl all the while exclaimed, with the most impudent hypocrisy, “Benedicite ! you are the most obstinate man I ever saw, to oblige me to use you thus : I never thought to have treated any one as your stubbornness has made me treat you.” The commendator was afterwards delivered by a party commanded by Hamilton of Bargany, who attacked the Black Vault of Denure for the purpose of his liberation. But the wild, savage, and ferocious conduct of the Earl shows in what manner the nobles obtained grants of the church lands from those who had possession of them for the time.

CHAPTER XXXVI

QUEEN MARY IN PRISON

'Tis a weary life this—
Vaults overhead, and grates and bars around me,
And my sad hours spent with as sad companions.

ELIZABETH, great as she was upon other occasions of her reign, acted on the present from mean and envious motives. She saw in the fugitive who implored her protection, a princess who possessed a right of succession to the crown of England, which, by the Catholic part of her subjects at least, was held superior to her own. She remembered that Mary had been led to assume the arms and titles of the English monarchy, or rather, that the French had assumed them in her name, when she was in childhood. She recollects, that Mary had been her rival in accomplishments; and certainly she did not forget that she was her superior in youth and beauty; and had the advantage, as she had expressed it herself, to be the mother of a fair son, while she remained a barren stock. Elizabeth, therefore, considered the Scottish Queen not as a sister and friend in distress, but as an enemy, over whom circumstances had given her power, and determined upon reducing her to the condition of a captive.

In pursuance of the line of conduct to which this mean train of reasoning led, the unfortunate Mary was sur-

rounded by English guards and removed to Bolton Castle, in Yorkshire.

Always demanding her liberty, and always having her demand evaded or refused, Mary was transported from castle to castle, and placed under the charge of various keepers, who incurred Elizabeth's most severe resentment, when they manifested any of that attention to soften the rigours of the poor Queen's captivity, which mere courtesy and compassion for fallen greatness, sometimes prompted. The very furniture and accommodations of her apartments were miserably neglected, and when she was permitted to take exercise, she was always strongly guarded, as if she had been a criminal.

During this severe captivity on the one part, and the greatest anxiety, doubt, and jealousy, on the other, the two Queens still kept up a sort of correspondence. In the commencement of this intercourse, Mary endeavoured, by the force of argument, by the seductions of flattery, and by appeals to the feelings of humanity, to soften towards her the heart of Elizabeth.

Despairing at length of making any favourable impression upon Elizabeth, Mary, with more wit than prudence, used her means of communicating with the Queen of England, to irritate and provoke her.

Being for a long time under the charge of the Earl of Shrewsbury, whose lady was a woman of a shrewish disposition, Mary used to report to Elizabeth, that the countess had called her old and ugly ; had said she was grown as crooked in her temper as in her body, with many other scandalous and abusive expressions, which must have given exquisite pain to any woman, and more especially to a Queen so proud as Elizabeth, and desirous, even in old age, of being still esteemed beautiful.

But, besides these female reasons for detesting her prisoner, Elizabeth had cause to regard the Queen of Scots with fear as well as envy and hatred. The Catholic party in England were still very strong, and they considered the claim of Mary to the throne of England as descended from the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII., to be preferable to that of the existing Queen, who was, in their judgment, illegitimate, as being the heir of an illegal marriage betwixt Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn. Various plots were entered into among the Papists for dethroning Elizabeth, and transferring the kingdom of England to Mary, a sovereign of their own religion, and in their eyes the lawful successor to the crown.

As fast as one of these conspiracies was discovered, another seemed to form itself ; and as the Catholics were promised powerful assistance from the King of Spain, and were urged forward by the impulse of enthusiasm, the danger appeared every day more and more imminent. It cannot be doubted that several of these plots were communicated to Mary in her imprisonment ; and, considering what grounds she had to complain of Elizabeth, it would have been wonderful if she had betrayed to her jailer the schemes which were formed to set her at liberty.

In 1586, Anthony Babington, a young gentleman of fortune and of talents, a zealous Catholic, and a fanatical enthusiast for the cause of the Scottish Queen, had associated with himself five resolute friends and adherents, all men of condition, in the desperate enterprise of assassinating Queen Elizabeth, and setting Mary at liberty. But their schemes were secretly betrayed to Walsingham, the celebrated minister of the Queen of England. They

were suffered to proceed as far as was thought safe, then seized, tried, and executed.

It was next resolved upon, that Mary should be brought to trial for her life, under pretence of her having encouraged Babington and his companions in their desperate purpose. She was removed to the castle of Fotheringay, and placed under two keepers, Sir Amias Paulet and Sir Drew Drury, whose well-known hatred of the Catholic religion was supposed to render them inclined to treat their unfortunate captive with the utmost rigour. Her private cabinet was broken open and stripped of its contents, her principal domestics were removed from her person, her money and her jewels were taken from her. Queen Elizabeth then proceeded to name Commissioners. They were forty in number, of the most distinguished of her statesmen and nobility, and were directed to proceed to the trial of Mary for her alleged accession to Babington's conspiracy.

On the 14th October, 1586, these Commissioners held their court in the great hall of Fotheringay Castle. Mary, left to herself, and having counsel of no friend, advocate, or lawyer, made, nevertheless, a defence becoming her high birth and distinguished talents. She refused to plead before a court composed of persons who were of a degree inferior to her own ; and when at length she agreed to hear and answer the accusation brought against her, she made her protest that she did so, not as owning the authority of the court, but purely in vindication of her own character.

The attorney and solicitor for Queen Elizabeth stated the conspiracy of Babington, as it unquestionably existed, and produced copies of letters which Mary was alleged to have written, approving the insurrection, and even the

assassination of Elizabeth. The declarations of Naue and Curle, two of Mary's secretaries, went to confirm the fact of her having had correspondence with Babington, by intervention of a priest called Ballard. The confessions of Babington and his associates were then read, avowing Mary's share in their criminal undertaking.

To these charges Mary answered, by denying that she ever had any correspondence with Ballard, or that she had even written such letters as those produced against her. She insisted that she could only be affected by such writings as bore her own hand and seal, and not by copies. Mary admitted that, having for many years despaired of relief or favour from Queen Elizabeth, she had, in her distress, applied to other sovereigns, and that she had also endeavoured to procure some favour for the persecuted Catholics of England ; but she denied that she had endeavoured to purchase liberty for herself, or advantage for the Catholics, at the expense of shedding the blood of any one ; and declared, that if she had given consent in word, or even in thought, to the murder of Elizabeth, she was willing, not only to submit to the doom of men, but even to renounce the mercy of God.

The evidence which was brought to convict the Queen of Scotland was such as would not now affect the life of the meanest criminal ; yet the Commission had the cruelty and meanness to declare Mary guilty of having been accessory to Babington's conspiracy, and of having contrived and endeavoured the death of Queen Elizabeth, contrary to the statute made for the security of the Queen's life. And the Parliament of England approved of and ratified this iniquitous sentence.

CHAPTER XXXVII

FOTHERINGAY CASTLE

Alas the change ! she placed her foot upon a triple throne,
And on the scaffold now she stands, beside the block, *alone* !

GLASFORD BELL.

IT was not perhaps to be expected that James VI. should have had much natural affection for his mother, whom he had never seen since his infancy. He had, therefore, seen Mary's captivity with little of the sympathy which a child ought to feel for a parent. But, upon learning these proceedings against her life, he sent ambassadors, first, Sir William Keith, and after him the Master of Gray, to intercede with Queen Elizabeth, and to use both persuasion and threats to preserve the life of his mother. The friendship of Scotland was at this moment of much greater importance to England than at any previous period of her history.

It therefore seems probable, that had James himself been very serious in his interposition, or had his ambassador been disposed to urge the interference committed to his charge with due firmness and vigour, it could scarce have failed in being successful, at least for a time. But the Master of Gray, as is now admitted, privately encouraged Elizabeth and her ministers to proceed in the cruel path they had chosen, and treacherously gave them reason to believe, that though, for the sake of decency, James found it necessary to interfere in his

mother's behalf, yet, in his secret mind, he would not be very sorry that Mary, who, in the eyes of a part of his subjects, was still regarded as sovereign of Scotland, should be quietly removed out of the way.

Yet Elizabeth would fain have had Mary's death take place in such a way as that she herself should not appear to have any hand in it. Her ministers were employed to write letters to Mary's keepers, insinuating what a good service they would do to Elizabeth and the Protestant religion, if Mary could be privately assassinated. But these stern guardians, though strict and severe in their conduct towards the Queen, would not listen to such persuasions.

As it was necessary from the scruples of Paulet and Drury, to proceed in all form, Elizabeth signed a warrant for the execution of the sentence pronounced on Queen Mary, and gave it to Davison, her secretary of state, commanding that it should be sealed with the great seal of England. Davison laid the warrant, signed by Elizabeth, before the Privy Council, and next day the great seal was placed upon it. Elizabeth, upon hearing this, affected some displeasure that the warrant had been so speedily prepared, and told the secretary that it was the opinion of wise men that some other cause might be taken with Queen Mary. Davison, in this pretended change of mind, saw some danger that his mistress might throw the fault of the execution upon him after it had taken place. He therefore informed the Keeper of the Seals what the Queen had said, protesting he would not venture further in the matter. The Privy Council, having met together, and conceiving themselves certain what were the Queen's real wishes, sent off the warrant for execution with their clerk Beale. The Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury, with the High Sheriff of the county,

were empowered and commanded to see the fatal mandate carried into effect without delay.

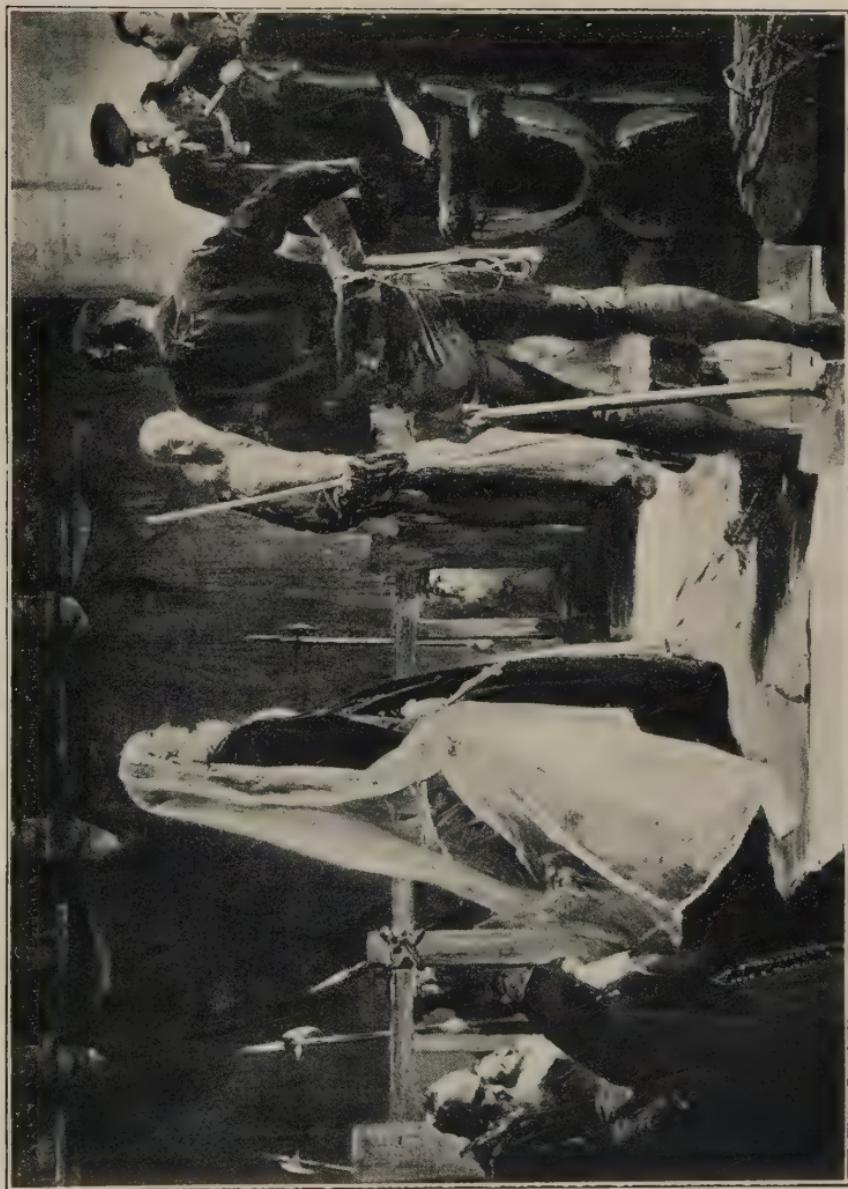
Mary received the melancholy intelligence with the utmost firmness. "The soul," she said, "was undeserving of the joys of Heaven, which would shrink from the blow of an executioner. She had not," she added, "expected that her kinswoman would have consented to her death, but submitted not the less willingly to her fate." She earnestly requested the assistance of a priest; but this favour, which is granted to the worst criminals, and upon which Catholics lay particular weight, was cruelly refused. The Queen then wrote her last will, and short and affectionate letters of farewell to her relations in France. She distributed among her attendants such valuables as had been left her, and desired them to keep them for her sake. This occupied the evening before the day appointed for the fatal execution.

On the 8th February, 1587, the Queen, still maintaining the same calm and undisturbed appearance which she had displayed at her pretended trial, was brought down to the great hall of the castle, where a scaffold was erected, on which were placed a block and a chair, the whole being covered with black cloth. The Master of her Household, Sir Andrew Melville, was permitted to take a last leave of the mistress whom he had served long and faithfully. He burst into loud lamentations, bewailing her fate, and deplored his own in being destined to carry such news to Scotland. "Weep not, my good Melville," said the Queen, "but rather rejoice; for thou shalt this day see Mary Stewart relieved from all her sorrows." She obtained permission, with some difficulty, that her maids should be allowed to attend her on the scaffold. It was objected that the extravagance of their grief might

disturb the proceedings ; she engaged for them that they would be silent.

When the Queen was seated in the fatal chair, she heard the death warrant read by Beale, the Clerk to the Privy Council, with an appearance of indifference ; nor did she seem more attentive to the devotional exercises of the Dean of Peterborough, in which, as a Catholic, she could not conscientiously join. She implored the mercy of Heaven, after the form prescribed by her own church. She then prepared herself for execution, taking off such parts of her dress as might interfere with the deadly blow. The executioners offered their assistance, but she modestly refused it, saying, she had neither been accustomed to undress before so many spectators, nor to be served by such grooms of the chamber. She quietly chid her maids, who were unable to withhold their cries of lamentation, and reminded them that she had engaged for their silence. Last of all Mary laid her head on the block, which the executioner severed from her body with two strokes of his axe. The headsman held it up in his hand, and the Dean of Peterborough cried out, “So perish all Queen Elizabeth’s enemies !” No voice, save that of the Earl of Kent, could answer *Amen*, the rest were choked with sobs and tears.

Thus died Queen Mary, aged a little above forty-four years. She was eminent for beauty, for talents, and accomplishments, nor is there reason to doubt her natural goodness of heart, and courageous manliness of disposition. Yet she was, in every sense, one of the most unhappy Princesses that ever lived, from the moment when she came into the world, in an hour of defeat and danger, to that in which a bloody and violent death closed a weary captivity of eighteen years.



The End—Fotheringay

CHAPTER XXXVIII

JAMES VI AND KINMONT WILLIE

Why prate of peace ? when, warriors all,
We clank in harness into hall,
And ever bare upon the board
Lies the necessary sword.

R. L. STEVENSON.

AMES'S reign in Scotland was marked with so many circumstances of difficulty, and even of danger, that he was placed upon his guard, and compelled to conduct himself with the strictest attention to the rules of prudence ; for he had little chance of overawing his turbulent nobility, but by maintaining the dignity of the royal character. If the King had possessed the ability of distributing largesses among his powerful subjects, his influence would have been greater ; but this was so far from being the case, that his means of supporting his royal state, excepting an annuity allowed to him by Elizabeth of five thousand pounds yearly, were in the last degree precarious. This was owing in a great measure to the plundering of the revenue of the crown during the civil wars of his minority, and the Regency of the Earl of Morton. The King was so dependent, that he could not even give an entertainment without begging poultry and venison from some of his more wealthy subjects ; and his wardrobe was so ill furnished, that he was obliged to request the loan of a pair of silk hose from the Earl of

Mar, that he might be suitably appareled to receive the Spanish ambassador.

In those wild days the very children had their deadly feuds, carried weapons, and followed the bloody example of their fathers. The following instance occurred in September 1595. The scholars of the High School of Edinburgh, having a dispute with their masters about the length of their holidays, resolved to stand out for a longer vacation. Accordingly, they took possession of the school and resisted the admission of the masters. Such foolish things have often occurred in public schools elsewhere ; but what was peculiar to the High School boys of Edinburgh was, that they defended the school with sword and pistol, and when Bailie MacMorran, one of the magistrates, gave directions to force the entrance, three of the boys fired, and killed him on the spot. There were none of them punished, because it was alleged that it could not be known which of them did the deed ; but rather because two of them were gentleman's sons. So you see the blood-thirsty spirit of the times descended even to children.

I must tell you of another exploit on the Borders, the last that was performed there, but certainly not the least remarkable for valour and conduct.

The English and Scottish Wardens, or their deputies, had held a day of truce for settling Border disputes, and, having parted friends, both, with their followers, were returning home. At every such meeting it was the general rule on the Borders that there should be an absolute truce for twenty-four hours, and that all men who attended the Warden on either side to the field should have permission to ride home again undisturbed.

Now, there had come to the meeting, with other Border men, a notorious depredator, called William Armstrong,

but more commonly known by the name of Kinmont Willie. This man was riding home on the north or Scottish side of the Liddell, where that stream divides England and Scotland, when some of the English who had enmity against him, or had suffered by his incursions, were unable to resist the temptation to attack him. They accordingly dashed across the river, pursued Kinmont Willie more than a mile within Scotland, made him prisoner, and brought him to Carlisle Castle.

As the man talked boldly and resolutely about the breach of truce in his person, and demanded peremptorily to be set at liberty, Lord Scrope told him scoffingly, that before he left the castle he should bid him "farewell," meaning, that he should not go without his leave. The prisoner boldly answered, "that he would not go without bidding him good-night."

The Lord of Buccleuch, who was Warden, or Keeper, of Liddesdale, demanded the restoration of Kinmont Willie to liberty, and complained of his being taken and imprisoned as a breach of the Border-laws, and an insult done to himself. Lord Scrope refused, or at least evaded, giving up his prisoner. Buccleuch then sent him a challenge, which Lord Scrope declined to accept, on the ground of his employment in the public service. The Scottish chief, therefore, resolved to redress by force the insult which his country as well as himself, had sustained on the occasion. He collected about three hundred of his best men, and made a night march to Carlisle Castle. A small party of chosen men dismounted, while the rest remained on horseback, to repel any attack from the town. The night being misty and rainy, the party to whom that duty was committed approached the foot of the walls, and tried to scale them by means of ladders which they had

brought with them for the purpose. But the ladders were found too short. They then, with mining instruments which they had provided, burst open a postern or wicket-door, and entered the castle. Their chief had given them strict orders to do no harm save to those who opposed them, so that the few guards, whom the alarm brought together, were driven back without much injury. Being masters of the castle, the trumpets of the Scottish Warden were then blown, to the no small terror of the inhabitants of Carlisle, surprised out of their quiet sleep by the sounds of invasion at so early an hour. The bells of the castle rang out ; those of the Cathedral and Moot-hall answered ; drums beat to arms ; and beacons were lighted, to alarm the warlike country around.

In the meanwhile, the Scottish party had freed Kinmont Willie from his dungeon. The first thing Armstrong did was to shout a good-night to Lord Scrope, asking him, at the same time, if he had any news for Scotland. The Borderers strictly obeyed the commands of their chief, in forbearing to take any booty. They returned from the castle, bringing with them their rescued countryman, and a gentleman named Spenser, an attendant on the constable of the castle. Buccleuch dismissed him, with his commendations to Salkeld the constable, whom he esteemed, he said, a better gentleman than Lord Scrope, bidding him say it was the Warden of Liddesdale who had done the exploit, and praying the constable, if he desired the name of a man of honour, to issue forth and seek a revenge. Buccleuch then ordered the retreat, which he performed with great leisure, and re-entered Scotland at sunrise in honour and safety. "There had never been a more gallant deed of vassalage done in Scotland," says an old historian, "no, not in Wallace's days."

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE GOWRIE-HOUSE MYSTERY

I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE strangest adventure of James's reign was the event called the Gowrie Conspiracy, over which there hangs a sort of mystery, which time has not even yet completely dispelled. There was an Earl of Gowrie condemned and executed, when James was but a boy. This nobleman left two sons, bearing the family name of Ruthven, who were well educated abroad, and accounted hopeful young men. The King restored to the eldest the title and estate of Gowrie, and favoured them both very much.

Now, it chanced in the month of August, 1600, that Alexander Ruthven, the younger of the two brothers, came early one morning to the King, who was then hunting in the Park of Falkland, and told him a story of his having seized a suspicious-looking man, a Jesuit, as he supposed, with a large pot of gold under his cloak. This man Ruthven said he had detained prisoner at his brother's house, in Perth, till the King should examine him, and take possession of the treasure. With this story he decoyed James from the hunting-field, and persuaded him to ride with him to Perth, without any other company than a few noblemen and attendants, who followed the King without orders.

When they arrived at Perth, they entered Gowrie House, the mansion of the Earl, a large massive building, having gardens which stretched down to the river Tay. The Earl of Gowrie was, or seemed surprised, to see the King arrive so unexpectedly, and caused some entertainment to be hastily prepared for his Majesty's refreshment. After the King had dined, Alexander Ruthven pressed him to come with him to see the prisoner in private; and James, curious by nature, and sufficiently indigent to be inquisitive after money, followed him from one apartment to another, until Ruthven led him into a little turret, where there stood—not a prisoner with a pot of gold—but an armed man, prepared, as it seemed, for some violent enterprise.

The King started back, but Ruthven snatched the dagger which the man wore, and pointing it to James's breast, reminded him of his father the Earl of Gowrie's death, and commanded him, upon pain of death, to submit to his pleasure. The King replied that he was but a boy when the Earl of Gowrie suffered, and upbraided Ruthven with ingratitude. The conspirator, moved by remorse or some other reason, assured the King that his life should be safe, and left him in the turret with the armed man, who, not very well selected to aid in a purpose so desperate, stood shaking in his armour, without assisting either his master or the King.

Let us now see what was passing below, during this strange scene betwixt the King and Ruthven. The attendants of James had begun to wonder at his absence, when they were suddenly informed by a servant of the Earl of Gowrie, that the King had mounted his horse, and had set out on his return to Falkland. The noblemen and attendants rushed into the courtyard of the

mansion, and called for their horses, the Earl of Gowrie at the same time hurrying them away. Here the porter interfered, and said the King could not have left the house, since he had not passed the gate, of which he had the keys. Gowrie, on the other hand, called the man a liar, and insisted that the King had departed.

While the attendants of James knew not what to think, a half smothered, yet terrified voice, was heard to scream from the window of a turret above their heads,—“ Help ! Treason ! Help ! my Lord of Mar ! ” They looked upwards, and beheld James’s face in great agitation pushed through the window, while a hand was seen grasping his throat, as if some one behind endeavoured by violence to draw him back.

The explanation was as follows :—The King, when left alone with the armed man, had, it seems, prevailed upon him to open the lattice window. This was just done when Alexander Ruthven again entered the turret, and, swearing that there was no remedy, but the King must needs die, he seized on him, and endeavoured by main force to tie his hands with a garter. James resisted in the extremity of despair, and dragging Ruthven to the window, now open, called out to his attendants in the manner we have described. His retinue hastened to his assistance. The greater part ran to the principal staircase, of which they found the doors shut, and immediately endeavoured to force them open. Meantime a page of the King’s, called Sir John Ramsay, discovered a back stair which led him to the turret, where Ruthven and the King were still struggling. Ramsay stabbed Ruthven twice with his dagger, James calling to him to strike high, as he had a doublet of proof on him. Ramsay then thrust Ruthven, now mortally wounded, towards the private

staircase, where he was met by Sir Thomas Erskine and Sir Hugh Herries, two of the royal attendants, who despatched him with their swords. His last words were, “Alas ! I am not to blame for this action.”

This danger was scarcely over, when the Earl of Gowrie entered the outer chamber, with a drawn sword in each hand, followed by seven attendants, demanding vengeance for the death of his brother. The King’s followers, only four in number, thrust James, for the safety of his person, back into the turret-closet, and shut the door ; and then engaged in a conflict, which was the more desperate, that they fought four to eight, and Herries was a lame and disabled man. But Sir John Ramsay having run the Earl of Gowrie through the heart, he dropped dead without speaking a word, and his servants fled. The doors of the great staircase were now opened to the nobles, who were endeavouring to force their way to the King’s assistance.

In the meantime a new peril threatened the King and his few attendants. The slain Earl of Gowrie was provost of the town of Perth, and much beloved by the citizens. On hearing what had happened, they ran to arms, and surrounded the mansion-house, where this tragedy had been acted, threatening, that if their provost were not delivered to them safe and sound, the King’s green coat should pay for it. Their violence was at last quieted by the magistrates of the town, and the mob were prevailed on to disperse.

The object of this strange conspiracy is one of the darkest in history, and what made it stranger, the armed man who was stationed in the turret could throw no light upon it. He proved to be one Henderson, steward to the Earl of Gowrie, who had been ordered to arm himself

for the purpose of taking a Highland thief, and was posted in the turret by Alexander Ruthven, without any intimation what he was to do ; so that the whole scene came upon him by surprise. The mystery seemed so impenetrable, and so much of the narrative rested upon James's own testimony, that many persons of that period, and even some historians of our own day, have thought that it was not a conspiracy of the brothers against the King, but of the King against the brothers ; and that James, having taken a dislike to them, had contrived the bloody scene, and then thrown the blame on the Ruthvens, who suffered in it. But, besides the placability and gentleness of James's disposition, and besides the consideration that no adequate motive can be assigned, or even conjectured, for his perpetrating such an inhospitable murder, it ought to be remembered that the King was naturally timorous, and could not even look at a drawn sword without shuddering ; so that it is contrary to all reason and probability to suppose that he could be the deviser of a scheme, in which his life was repeatedly exposed to the most imminent danger. However, many of the clergy refused to obey James's order to keep a day of solemn thanksgiving for the King's deliverance, intimating, without hesitation, that they greatly doubted the truth of his story. One of them being pressed by the King very hard, said—" That doubtless he must believe it, since his majesty said he had seen it ; but that, had he seen it himself, he would not have believed his own eyes." James was much vexed with this incredulity, for it was hard not to obtain credit after having been in so much danger.

Nine years after the affair, some light was thrown upon the transaction by one Sprot, a notary-public, who, out

of mere curiosity, had possessed himself of certain letters, said to have been written to the Earl of Gowrie by Robert Logan of Restalrig, a scheming, turbulent, and profligate man. In these papers, allusion was repeatedly made to the death of Gowrie's father, to the revenge which was meditated, and to the execution of some great and perilous enterprise. Lastly, there was intimation that the Ruthvens were to bring a prisoner by sea to Logan's fortress of Fastcastle, a very strong and inaccessible tower, overhanging the sea, on the coast of Berwickshire. This place he recommends as suitable for keeping some important prisoner in safety and concealment, and adds, he had kept Bothwell there in his utmost distresses, let the King and his council say what they would.

All these expressions seem to point at a plot, not affecting the King's life, but his personal liberty, and make it probable, that when Alexander Ruthven had frightened the King into silence and compliance, the brothers intended to carry him through the gardens, and put him on board of a boat, and so conveying him down the Firth of Tay, and round the north-east coast of Fife, might, after making a private signal, which Logan alludes to, place their royal prisoner in security in Fastcastle. The seizing upon the person of the King was a common enterprise among the Scottish nobles, and the father of the Ruthvens had lost his life for such an attempt.

CHAPTER XL

THE UNION

One flag, one land, one heart, one hand,
One Nation ever more!

O. W. HOLMES.

WE now approach the end of this collection of Tales. The English people began to turn their eyes towards James VI. of Scotland as the nearest heir of King Henry VIII., and the rightful successor to the throne of England when Queen Elizabeth should fail. She was now old, her health broken, and her feelings painfully agitated by the death of Essex, her principal favourite. After his execution, she could scarcely be said ever to enjoy either health or reason. She sat on a pile of cushions, with her finger in her mouth, attending, as it seemed, to nothing, saving to the prayers which were from time to time read in her chamber.

While the Queen of England was thus struggling out the last moments of life, her subjects were making interest with her successor James, with whom even Cecil himself, the Prime Minister of England, had long kept up a secret correspondence. The breath had no sooner left Elizabeth's body, than the near relation and godson of the late Queen, Sir Robert Carey, got on horseback, and, travelling with a rapidity, which almost equalled that of the modern mail-coach, carried to the Palace of Holyrood

the news, that James was King of England, France, and Ireland, as well as of his native dominions of Scotland.

James arrived in London on the 7th of May 1603, and took possession of his new realms without the slightest opposition ; and thus the island of Great Britain, so long divided into the separate kingdoms of England and Scotland, became subject to the same prince. Here, therefore, must end the “Tales of a Grandfather,” so far as they relate to the History of Scotland, considered as a distinct and separate kingdom.

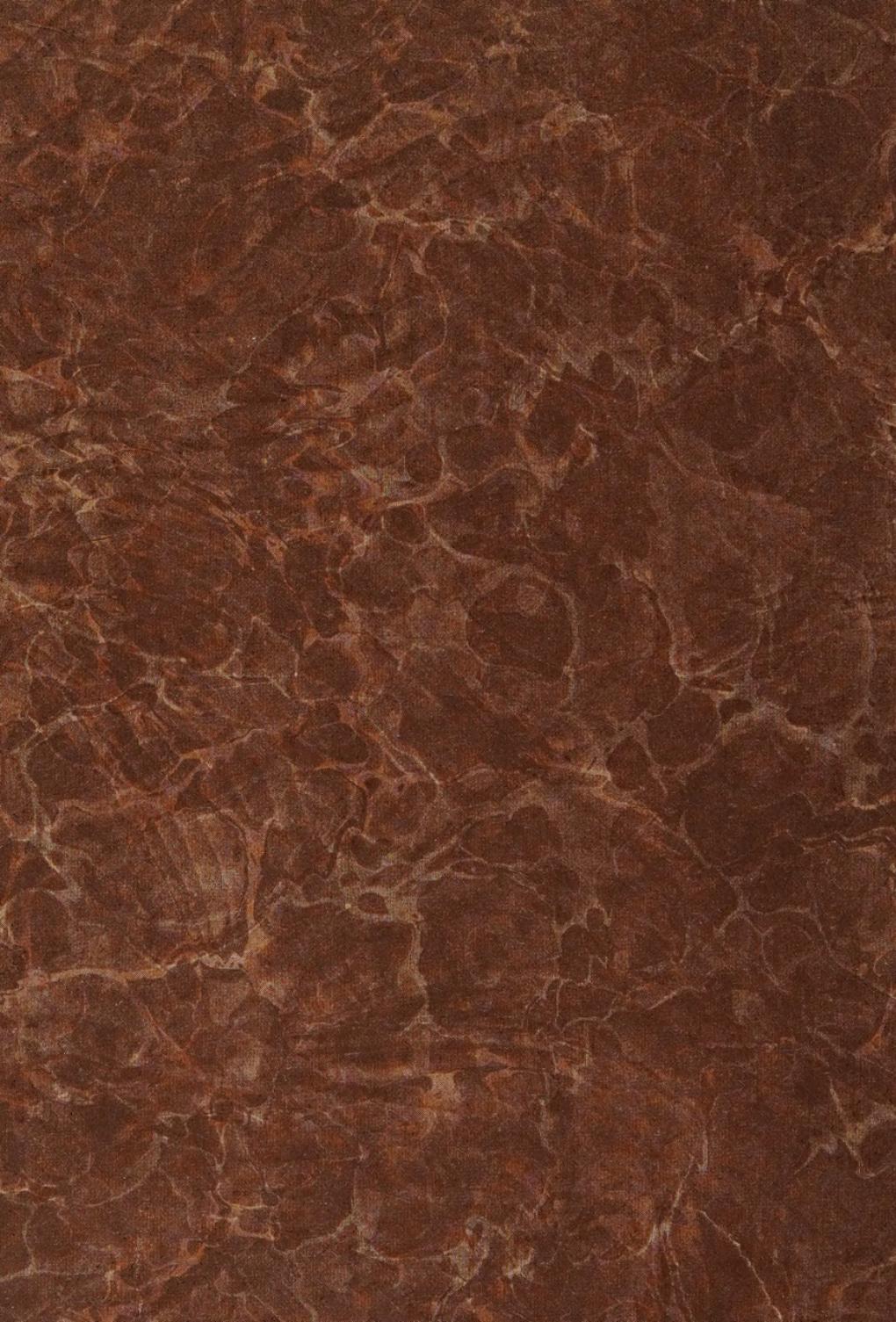
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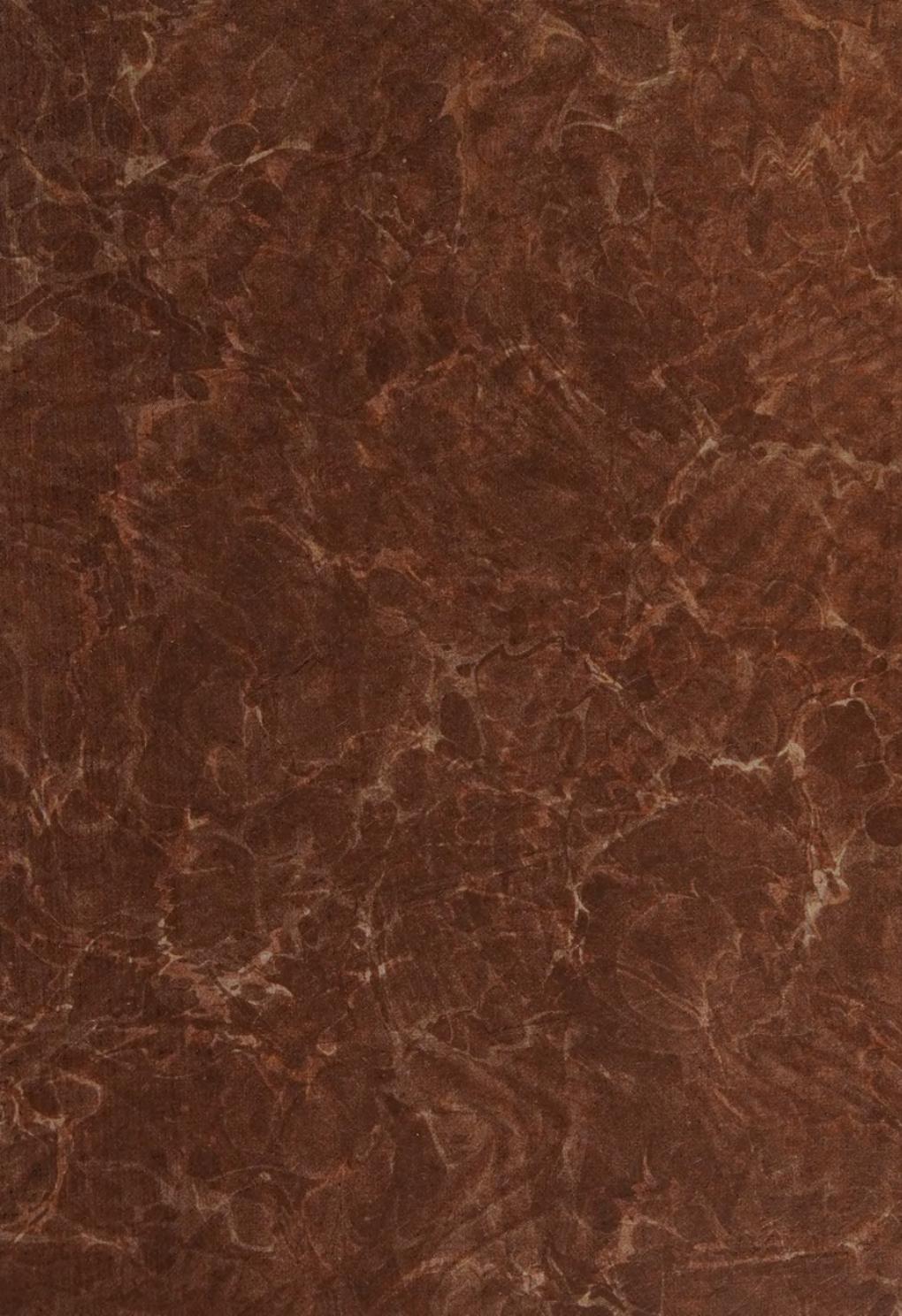
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.		PAGE
1286	Death of Alexander III., and succession of his granddaughter Margaret, Maid of Norway	
1290	Margaret dies at Orkney, on her way to Scotland; Robert Bruce the elder and John Baliol, among other competitors, claim the throne	
1292	Edward I. of England, as overlord, awards the crown to Baliol	
1296	Baliol, having withdrawn his allegiance to England, is deposed by Edward, and sent prisoner to London	
1297	Rising of the Scots under William Wallace	3
	English defeated at Stirling Bridge	8
	Wallace appointed Guardian of Scotland	11
1298	Wallace, defeated at Falkirk, resigns the Guardianship	
1305	Betrayal and execution of Wallace	14
1306	Robert Bruce, grandson of John Baliol's rival, joins the Scottish cause	15
	The Red Comyn slain by Bruce at Dumfries	20
	Bruce crowned at Scone	21
	Defeated at Methven	22
1307	Edward I. died; succeeded by his son, Edward II.	23
	Lord James Douglas recovers his castle from the English	44
1312	Edinburgh, Linlithgow, and Roxburgh castles taken from the English	46
1314	Battle of Bannockburn	50
1318	Scots defeated by the English in Ireland, and Edward Bruce slain	65
1327	Randolph and Douglas raid Northumberland and Durham	71
1328	Treaty of Northampton, recognising the independence of Scotland, signed	72
1329	Bruce dies at Cardross; succeeded by his son, David II.	78
	Edward Baliol, supported by the English, defeats the Scots at Dupplin	80
1333	English defeat the Scots at Halidon Hill	87
1346	English defeat the Scots, and take prisoner King David, at Neville's Cross	
1357	David released on payment of ransom	
1370	David II. dies in Edinburgh Castle	
	Robert Stewart, grandson of Robert Bruce, succeeds David II.	
1388	Battle of Otterburn	95

Chronological Table

A.D.		PAGE
1390	Robert II. dies ; succeeded by his son, Robert III.	
1396	Fight between Clan Chattan and Clan Kay	98
1401	Duke of Rothesay, eldest son of the King, murdered by his uncle, the Duke of Albany	
1402	Scots defeated at Homildon Hill	
1405	Prince James, on his way to France, captured by the English	
1406	Robert III. dies ; succeeded by his son, James I.	102
1424	James I. returns to Scotland	103
1437	James I. murdered ; succeeded by his son, James II.	108
1440	William, Earl of Douglas, and his brother murdered	113
1460	James II. killed at Roxburgh Castle ; succeeded by his son, James III.	122
1479	Earl of Mar, brother of the King, murdered	127
1482	The King's favourites hanged at Lauder Bridge	132
1488	James III. defeated by his nobles at Sauchie Burn, and murdered after the battle ; succeeded by his son, James IV.	
1503	James marries Margaret, daughter of Henry VII.	138
1513	James defeated and slain at Flodden ; succeeded by his son, James V.	150
1528	Martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton at St Andrews	162
1542	Rout of Solway Moss	
1544	James V. dies ; succeeded by his daughter Mary	182
1546	Scots defeat the English at Ancrum Moor	
1547	George Wishart burned at St Andrews, and Cardinal Beaton murdered	
1548	Queen Mary sent to France	183
1558	Mary marries the Dauphin	186
1561	Mary returns to Scotland	186
1565	Mary marries Darnley	187
1566	Murder of Rizzio	189
1567	Murder of Darnley	192
	Mary marries Bothwell	197
	Mary surrenders at Carberry Hill	200
	Mary imprisoned in Lochleven, and abdicates	202
1568	Mary escapes from Lochleven, and is defeated at Langside	203
	Mary crosses to England, and is imprisoned by Elizabeth	206
1570	Regent Murray shot by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh	208
1572	Death of John Knox	211
1582	The Raid of Ruthven	
1587	Execution of Queen Mary	
1600	The Gowrie Conspiracy	224
1603	Union of the Crowns under James VI.	229
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